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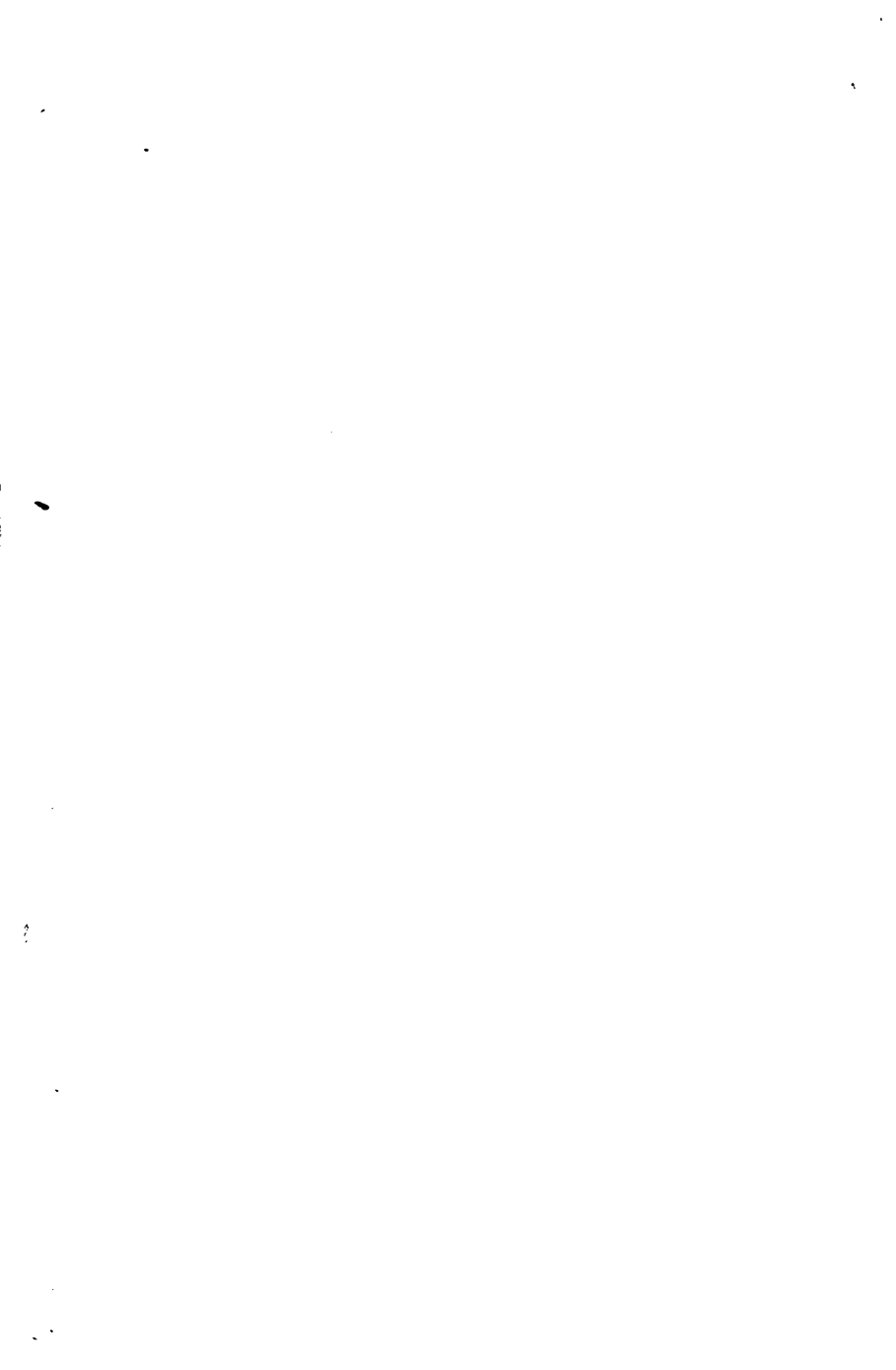
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# EARLIER STORIES

## *SECOND SERIES*

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN  
PRETTY POLLY PEMBERTON

BY

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT

NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1891

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE.

These love stories were written for and printed in "Peterson's Ladies' Magazine." Owing to the fact that this magazine was not copyrighted, a number of them have been issued in book form without my consent, and representing the sketches to be my latest work.

If these youthful stories are to be read in book form, it is my desire that my friends should see the present edition, which I have revised for the purpose, and which is brought out by my own publishers.

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT.

*October, 1878.*

KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN





# KATHLEEN MAVOURNEEN.

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## CHAPTER I.

KATE DAVENANT.

"THERE she goes!" said Fayne, "on that light-built black. Jove! how she rides!"

All the men rushed to the window, as men will rush, to look at a feminine celebrity. Three of them there were—Brandon, Coyne, and Meynell. Fayne had a place in the window before. One man had not moved—that man was Carl Seymour; and belles were not his hobby, so he kept his seat and went on sketching.

"She," who was properly represented by Kate Davenant, passed by the Ocean House on a dashing trot, her groom following her; and when she was out of sight, the men came back to their seats again.

"I wonder if it's true?" said Brandon, half hesitatingly.

"If what is true?" asked Fayne.

"About—well, they say she is such a dreadful flirt, you know. She don't look like it."

Carl Seymour shrugged his shoulders.

"Don't be so guileless, my dear fellow," he said. "Women never do 'look like it.' Innocence is their chief characteristic. Do you suppose Eve 'looked like it' when she gave Adam the apple? No! If she had, the masculine part of humanity, at least, would have been rustivating in the Garden of Eden to the present day."

"Have you ever met her?" asked Coyne, suddenly.

"Eve? No, not to my recollection."

"Miss Davenant, I mean?"

"No."

"Well," said Coyne, with an odd tone in his voice, "don't form any opinion until you have. You might be sorry afterward. Older men than you have risked their whole happiness upon that woman; wiser and as cool-headed men (I don't think there are many cooler-headed) would have given their lives for a smile from her lips." And he walked to the

window with his hands in his pockets, and began to whistle softly. A little silence followed, one of those unaccountable silences which sometimes fall upon talkers with a sense of present discomfort or warning for the future.

Coyne was the oldest of the party, who were spending the summer at Newport. Kate Davenant had been the last arrival, and as she was a woman, and beautiful, she had been pretty liberally discussed. Perhaps the discussion had been all the more liberal, because Miss Davenant's fame had reached Newport before her. People, the stronger sex more especially, had a great deal to say about Miss Davenant. About her perfection of beauty, in the first place; about her wonderful magnetic fascination; about the tastefulness of her toilets; and last, but not least, about her aunt and chaperon, Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery. The latter lady was certainly all that society could desire as an indorsement. Rich, well-born, her right to rule supreme was not to be disputed. But that did not account for Miss Davenant. Some bold inquirer had once ventured to ask about Kate, but had been decidedly snubbed, for Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery had merely placed

her eyeglass in her aristocratic eye and stared her down, saying, "Kate is my adopted daughter," and from that day the irrepressible member had been "cut." So the matter rested, when Miss Davenant made her first appearance at Newport. Her costumes were superb pieces of art, her air was perfect, the witchery of her manner carried all before it. She might be the heiress of millions, or she might be merely a dependent upon Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery—a poor relation—but to some people the uncertainty made the situation all the more piquant.

"George!" ejaculated young Spooney, who was an unsung hero on the look-out for a fortune, "it's like a lottery, jolly, but dangerous. Fellow puts down his money, and draws either a prize or a blank."

Now I will go back to the men who helped me to open my story.

Brandon, Fayne, and Meynell, have gone to play billiards. Coyne and Seymour have stayed behind. The man with the clear eyes, straight features, and down-drooping blonde mustache, is Carl Seymour; the dark-faced man who leans upon the window is Angus Coyne.

"I remember just such an evening as this spent by the sea-side nine—no, ten years ago," said Seymour, and he broke off with a short, half-forced laugh.

Coyne looked up at him.

"What," he said, "have you a romance, too?"

Seymour laughed again.

"Yes. The oddest of all romances. A romance with a nine-year-old heroine."

"A romance, indeed," said Coyne. "But how did it become one?"

Seymour threw himself into an arm-chair, and looked out at the sea again with something of thought in his face.

"There are strange things in a man's life," he said, musingly. "I often look back on mine, and wonder at the changing path that leads us all to the one ending—a mound of earth covering all our old faults and stumblings. There has been plenty of change in mine, but only one romance, and Miss Davenport and the sea brought it back to me to-night."

"Miss Davenport?"

"Yes. Kate Davenport you said: and a

Kate, or Kathleen, was my little heroine. Wait a moment. You shall see her."

He went to his desk and brought out a package of drawings, laying them before his friend.

"Look at her," he said, with a glow in his eyes. "The little darling! Kathleen Mavourneen, I used to call her."

There were about a dozen rough pictures, some larger, some smaller, some half-finished, some perfect: but all taken from one model. A slender, wild-looking child, with great stars of eyes, and wonderful tangled hair. The prettiest, and most perfect of all, was a water-color, and showed her standing, barefooted and bare-headed, ankle-deep in the tide, picking up shells; her cheeks all abloom, her magnificent, unkempt hair blown out like a flame-colored banner, and tossing over her shoulders.

"That was the first time I saw her," commented Carl. "It was at a little village on the coast of Maine, where she lived with her old grandmother. Nine years ago," with a sigh. "How time flies."

"She is a weird-looking little beauty," said Coyne. "But how did your story end?"

"Practically. Perhaps a little sadly, too. It ended with my good-bys, and with Kathleen's arms around my neck, and her tawny mane blowing in my eyes as she kissed me. No woman has kissed me since—sometimes I think no woman ever will. 'Kathleen Mavourneen' spoiled me for the rest of womankind."

"Don't let her prove fatal to your happiness," jested Coyne. "Kates are dangerous; and, do you know, this child-love of yours is not unlike that most dangerous of all Kates—Kate Davenant?"

"I hope not," said Seymour, quickly. "I would rather think not."

"Why not?" said Coyne, as quickly. "You say you have never seen her."

"No; and I don't know why, unless that I want to keep my little Kathie to myself. I don't want to hear men speak of her as they speak of Miss Davenant. It may seem absurd and romantic to you, but I think if ever I saw Kate Ogilvie again, I should make her my wife; and I don't wish to think men have made bets on my wife's flirtations, and called her 'the Circe.'"

Coyne did not answer. He was thinking



of Kathleen Mavourneen—not Seymour's, but Kathleen Mavourneen, as Kate Davenant had sung it to him, a few months ago, in the old-fashioned hotel-garden on the banks of the Rhine. Kate Davenant had been his romance. Had been, I say, because the romance was over now, and he had only been one of the many whom men had made bets about; only one of the many who had succumbed to the charming of the woman they called "the Circe."

## CHAPTER II.

## BELLE MARQUISE.

ON an elegant little stand, in a charming dressing-room, stood a bouquet of scarlet and white blossoms, fringed with feathery grasses; and opposite the stand, sitting in a luxurious arm-chair, lounged Kate Davenant.

Kate Davenant! It could be no other. Look at her! Face like snow, with a soft rose-red palpitating on either cheek; eyes dark purple, great masses of brown, satiny hair, that, in some lights, looked almost black. The artistic light, falling upon her artistic face; her small, arched feet, in their pretty slippers; the easy, graceful lines of the half-lounging figure—what a picture it was! Suddenly she jumped from the chair, and went to the cheval glass. She glanced at herself, from arching foot to shining, delicate head, just as a critical observer might look at a beautiful picture. There was something in her eyes that seemed a little like fascination, as she drew nearer and nearer, until the bright, morning sunshine,

falling full upon her, brought out all the brilliancy of rose-red and dazzling white on her skin. She gazed at it all for a few moments, and then her lips parted in a scornful, ungirlish laugh.

"What is it all worth?" she said. "The outline is graceful, the tinting rich and delicate. What will it bring, I wonder? But the picture goes to the highest bidder, of course."

It was so bitterly said, that the very energy seemed to rouse her from her late languid mood. She rang for her maid.

"Lotte," she said, when the girl came in, "where did those flowers come from?" and she pointed to the bouquet upon the stand.

"Mr. Griffith sent them. They arrived this morning, early."

Miss Davenant shrugged her shoulders.

"Where is Mrs. Montgomery?"

"In her room. There was a note, ma'am-selle, with the flowers."

"That will do."

When the girl was gone, she took the note in her hand and read it, with the little sarcastic smile curving her lips.

"Very pretty, Mr. Griffith!" shrugging her

shoulders again. "Very pretty, indeed—but is it wise? Do you know how many people send bouquets and make these charming speeches? Nevertheless, since you desire it——" She stopped, and taking a waxen camellia from the cluster, put it in a small glass by itself. "There, it will keep fresher now, and I will wear it this evening," she said.

Three years ago there would have been a little pang of remorse in her heart; for this poor Tom Griffith, who sent the flowers, was an honest young fellow, and loved her as only an honest-hearted simpleton can love a woman who was such a woman as Kate Davenant was. "The Circe," the men called her. Well, well, when a woman loses her faith in the world, God help her, and mankind pity her! Kate Davenant had lost her faith long ago. Perhaps, as I tell my story, you will understand how she had lost it; but now I can only show her to you as a woman, whose wonderful grace and beauty turned the great game of hearts into her hand, and brought new excitement into her half frothed-out life.

"What has the world done for me?" she

had asked herself, bitterly, a thousand times. "There may be love and truth in it, but I have not seen it yet, heaven help me!"

So it was that she wore Tom Griffith's flower that night, with a little sarcastic remembrance of how many flowers she had worn before, and how many flowers she had flung aside as soon as she tired of them.

She went down to Mrs. Montgomery, after she was dressed, and found that aristocratic matron in a humor which was none of the best.

"It's perfectly absurd!" said her aunt. "I came here to escape Brown, Jones, and Robinson, and no sooner do I find a comfortable parlor in a hotel, than Brown, Jones, and Robinson make an invasion. I thought Newport was select, but in the present state of society no place is select. One runs against Brown in Rome, meets Jones in full costume on Mont Blanc, and has Robinson staring one in the face at the Tuilleries. I will tell you what I have been thinking of, Kate. I saw, yesterday, in our drive, that a handsome house was to be let down the Avenue. Why shouldn't we take it for the season?"

"We might," said Miss Davenant. "I, for one, am tired of hotel life."

Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery looked meditatively for a moment.

"We will," she said, at last. "One feels so much more at ease in a private establishment."

Mrs. Montgomery was a decisive, business-like woman, and her "We will," was conclusive; so, that point disposed of, she turned her attention to another.

"Where did you get your flowers?" she asked.

Kate glanced indolently at the reflected blossoms in the pier-glass, and smiled a little.

"From Mr. Griffith."

"Her aunt put her eyeglass in her eye, and coughed somewhat reprovingly.

"Very good, my dear. And Mr.—Mr.—, this young man, whatever his name is, got them at the florist's, and paid a ruinous price for the pleasure of seeing you wear them. You are a very handsome woman, Kate—but don't you think that sort of thing may be carried too far?"

Kate shrugged her shoulders with a haughty,

indifferent gesture. She did not like interference, even from her aunt.

"My dear aunt," she said, "I wear the green ticket yet, you know, and as a wearer of the green ticket, am entitled to a little amusement. I am very wicked, of course, and 'this sort of thing' is very shocking; but then, you see, wouldn't life be a trifle wearing without it? Our life, I mean. We don't look forward to domestic felicity, and the days of Arcadian shepherds and shepherdesses lie a few centuries behind us."

Her aunt's reply was very laconic. She never entered into discussion.

"You please yourself, of course," she said. "My remark was a mere suggestion. I don't think there is any fear of your getting romantic notions, at least."

The following day, Mrs. Montgomery proceeded to make arrangements connected with her new establishment, and within a week she took possession, with the full intent of enjoying herself.

"If I like the place as much as ever at the end of the season, I will buy it," she said to Kate.

A few days later, as Miss Davenant sat at the piano, her aunt came in from making some calls.

"You remember the Scotchman we met in Germany, Kate?" she asked. "Coyne his name was."

Kate's hands dropped away from the keys, and her face caught an expression of faint interest.

"Yes. What reminded you of him?"

"I met him to-day at the Farnhams. He came with a friend to call on Alice. The friend was quite a striking-looking man. His name was Carl Seymour, and he is an artist."

"Carl Seymour, did you say?"

"Yes. What a pity such men should be thrown into such places. I told them they might call on us. Where is Lotte? I want her."

When her relative had gone in search of Lotte, Kate Davenant got up from the piano and walked to the hearth, resting both elbows on the mantel, and looking at herself. There was a brief space in which the beautiful face the pier-glass reflected was quite clear to her sight; but, then, something strangely like tears



blurred the reflection with their mist, and at last she dropped her face with a little rising tremor in her throat. Tears did not come easily into Kate Davenant's eyes; but now the fresh breath of sea air, blowing through the open window, mingled itself with an old memory of childish days, so much purer and better than her womanhood, that her eyes filled in spite of all.

"I wonder if he has forgotten? Men forget these things more easily than women. But ah, me! nine years—nine years, and 'Kathleen Mavourneen' is a woman of the world."

When Coyne and Seymour returned from their call upon Alice Farnham, they talked about Mrs. Montgomery and her niece.

"I may be a fool!" said Coyne, with his gray eyes flashing. "I may be a fool, but I do not forget her—I never can!"

In their room they found Tom Griffith waiting for them, evidently in a very ecstatic frame of mind.

"I've been to Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery's," he said. "Kate—Miss Davenant—has promised to drive out with me this evening;" and he glanced down rather sheepishly at a rose in his button-hole.

Carl seated himself before his easel and began to work, whistling the while softly. Was there never a man yet who had resisted Kate Davenant's witchery? He had never heard of one; and in a half-angered wonder at her fascination, he felt a certain haughty power to resist it himself.

It was weeks before he saw her. Newport grew gayer and gayer, and Mrs. Montgomery's entertainments were the principal features in its gayety. Kate rode by the hotel every day, sometimes with one adorer, sometimes with another, and sometimes only with a groom: but Seymour never cared to look up. The men brought stories of her, and grew loud in their admiration of her grace; and every man who spoke of her was one added to the list of victims.

But, at last, a sensation arose in the shape of croquet-parties, and at the first of these assemblies Carl met the syren. The party was given at the Farnhams; and when he made his appearance, pretty, good-natured Alice took possession of him, and proceeded to enlighten him as to the various members of the company.

"The gentleman with the dark face is the

new nabob, Mr. Collier; and that tall gentleman is our literary lion, Gerald Colycinth; and the one standing near him is a senator. It takes all sorts of people to make up a croquet-party; but one must have a sprinkling of celebrities, you know. Now, I want to show you somebody very important. Let me see—where is she? But, of course, you have seen Miss Davenant—the Circe, as they call her?”

“Not, ‘of course,’” said Carl, “because I have not had that pleasure.”

Alice’s blue eyes flew open.

“Is it possible? Why, every one is going crazy about her.”

“Pray except me,” replied Carl. “I am anxious to preserve my senses.”

“Wait until you know her,” laughed Alice. “Ah! there she is. The centre of attraction of that knot of gentlemen. They always *do* crowd around her in that manner, celebrities and all. It is my impression the senator would give his seat for a smile. How does she manage to dress so perfectly?”

As Alice said, Kate was, as usual, the centre of attraction of a knot of the enslaved. Carl looked at her, and fairly caught his breath.

He was an artist, and the wonderful perfection of tinting in wearer and costume struck him with an intense pleasure. Some world-reading Frenchwoman has said, "Give me a handsome pair of eyes, and I will do the rest." Kate Davenant had not only the eyes, but every other beauty; and then she thoroughly understood what the Frenchwoman spoke of as "the rest." Dress is a rather powerful attraction, and in this age of improvements beauty unadorned would be quite likely to be pronounced a dowdy. Keeping this in mind, Miss Davenant ruled supreme. Of her dress, I will only say that it was a wonderful piece of art, and from satiny puffs to slender foot a charming blending of delicate pearl-gray lace and flowers.

"Charmed already?" jested Alice, looking at Carl's watching face.

He shook his head.

"No. I am thinking of something. Do you remember the poem?"

"As you sit where lustres strike you,  
Sure to please,  
Do we love you most, or like you,  
Belle Marquise?"

Alice tapped the tip of her slim slipper meditatively with her mallet. She was a nice girl, but her good-nature did not make her very fond of Kate Davenant. A woman who is a belle is very rarely a favorite with her own sex—and Miss Davenant's success was too universal to make the feminine darlings absolutely adore her; and apart from that, Alice Farnham had a small thorn on her own account in the shape of Tom Griffith. Tom Griffith was her cousin, and until lately something a little more; but circumstances alter cases, and this case, the Circe had altered herself, and doing so had not gained pretty Alice's fervent esteem. Accordingly, the young lady did not defend her against Seymour's quotation.

### CHAPTER III.

#### JUST A THING OF PUFFS AND PATCHES.

MISS DAVENANT went through her croquet, as she went through everything else, with gracefulness and success. The people who looked upon the game scientifically were charmed with her interest and knowledge of its points; and those who regarded it merely as a game found time to be charmed with her beautiful face and spirited comments. Once or twice, during the evening, she glanced toward Carl Seymour, with a quick searching in her eyes.

"Who is he?" she asked of Tom Griffith, as she sent the senator's ball spinning across the lawn. "The slender man, with the blonde mustache, I mean."

"Don't you know him?" asked Tom, a little surprised. "That's Carl Seymour."

"An artist, is he not?" said Kate, coolly. "Mind where you send that ball."

"Yes. Painted 'Ulysses and the Syrens'—that picture there was such a *furor* about."

"I remember. Quite a celebrity, I should imagine," and she went on with her croquet.

Half a dozen times in the course of the afternoon, Carl Seymour passed her, and always with such a cool, careless face, that she could not fail to notice it—another woman might have been annoyed. Not so Kate Davenant. She knew better than to feel displeasure at an indifference which she was certain to overcome. Perhaps it pleased her a little. But, at last, on his way to recover a truant ball, Carl passed her as she stood in a little knot of admirers, laughing. There was a wonderful silver tone in her laughter, and something in it struck Carl Seymour, when he heard it, with an odd sense of remembrance. Where had he heard the laugh before? Then he turned and looked at her face. His glance did not seem to trouble her; the fringed, purple eyes swept him from head to foot, and then Miss Davenant took up the thread of her conversation. He had never seen such eyes as those but once before; and his memory went back to the rock-bound shore, and the sweet child-face, so like, yet so unlike this girl's—the face of the child-love he had called Kathleen Mavourneen.

He stood at some little distance, listening to her and looking at her. The rose-red fluttered on her cheek, and the soft, large eyes opened and drooped. The usually grave senator gazed at the fair face entranced, and listened for every ring of her sweet laugh, as he would have listened for the notes of a prima donna. There was a curious contest going on in Carl Seymour's mind. He was wondering whether Miss Davenant attracted or repelled him. The sweet flower-face struck every artistic taste; the memory in the silver laugh touched him he knew not how; but then again came a remembrance of the stories he had heard, stories which to a proud, fastidious man seemed almost terrible. It might be a beautiful woman who wore Tom Griffith's flowers, and dazzled proud men with her smiles: but was it a true one? Others might have been content with the rose-leaf tint and star eyes. Carl Seymour was not. He was a man apt to be a little sarcastic and severe upon women of the world; and as he watched Kate Davenant, he thought of the marquise again, and wondered if the application was not correct.



"You are just a porcelain trifle,  
Belle Marquise ;  
Just a thing of puffs and patches,  
Made for madrigals and catches,  
Not for heart-wounds, but for scratches,  
Oh, Marquise !

"Just a pinky porcelain trifle,  
Belle Marquise ;  
Pâte tendre, rose Du Barry,  
Quick at verbal point and parry ;  
Clever, certes—but to marry—  
No, Marquise !"

He was thinking over this as Miss Davenant chatted with the enamored senator, and laughed musically at poor Tom Griffith's somewhat far-fetched witticisms. He was thinking about it when, at last, she took the senator's arm, and came toward Carl's side of the lawn.

He was an elderly bachelor, this senator ; and, like most elderly bachelors, quite susceptible, and felt more than senatorial dignity as he crossed the ground with the exquisitely gloved hand resting upon his portly arm, and Kate's voice softened deferentially. One of the fair hands was ungloved, and after the trailing dress had swept by him, glancing

downward, Carl Seymour caught sight of a delicately-tinted trifle of pearl-gray glove lying at his feet. He took it up. Such a trifle as it was! Such a very *bijou* of kid and silver-thread embroidery! Just with the very moulding of the soft fingers, with the very faint fragrance of lilies floating over it. Carl smiled a little with a half sensation of pleasure, it was so pretty. A few steps took him to Miss Davenant's side, and a few words attracted her attention.

"Pardon me!" he said, bowing. "But you have dropped your glove."

Just a faint flutter of red on her cheek as she took it from his hand, just a soft uplifting of the dark-fringed eyes.

"I thank you!" she said, returning his bow, and then she passed him.

Only two words, and such simple ones; but it was the Circe who had uttered them, and in the sweet, sweet voice which had touched so many hearts before. It had hardly occupied a minute's time; and when she passed on, she seemed to have forgotten it, and the voice that addressed the senator was just as sweet. Nevertheless, Carl felt a little spell-bound, in

spite of his sarcasm. He forgot about the marquise, and stood still looking after her.

"I don't wonder at their calling her the Circe," he said. And then the old memory came back to him, and he added lowly, though smiling at his fancy, "Kathleen Mavourneen! Kathleen Mavourneen!"

As he stood there, he saw an elderly lady coming from the house, leaning on a gentleman's arm. A once handsome woman, perhaps a belle in her time, but just now suggestive of a dowager, in the sere and yellow leaf, and at the same time a woman with a great deal of haughtiness in her carriage, and cool speculation in her keen, handsome eyes. He knew who it was. He had seen Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery before, and guessed rightly that she intended to renew her acquaintance with him. Mrs. Montgomery understood precisely how much a celebrity was worth in the fashionable world, and "Ulysses and the Syrens" had done a great deal toward earning Carl Seymour a name.

She stopped on reaching him, and introduced her companion, the gentleman Alice Farnham had spoken of as our "literary lion."

"Lions, both of you!" she said, nodding her handsome old head. "How is it that you have not been roaring this evening, Mr. Seymour? When we are so fortunate as to secure a lion in our menagerie of society, we consider ourselves cheated if he don't exhibit his leonine characteristics."

"But I am such a very young lion," laughed Carl. "Quite a cub, one might say. And wouldn't my roar be a little too mild among the full-grown quadrupeds?"

Mrs. Montgomery laughed, too. She liked men who were apt and self-possessed—and this gentlemen seemed to be both.

"You are too modest," she said. "But I must not forget what I came here for. Why don't you call on us? Kate saw your picture last season, and has been talking about it ever since. Art and artists are her hobby."

Carl smilingly accepted the invitation. Fate had certainly taken him in hand, and Fate rules us all. When Mrs. Montgomery carried her lion back to the house, she also carried Carl's promise that he would call upon her the next day.

"Kate will be delighted to see you," she said, with the smiling nod. "Good-evening!"

After that my hero went over to Alice Farnham, and chatted with her until the company dispersed, and then he returned home and looked at the picture of little Kathie, wondering at the resemblance between the two pairs of tender eyes.

The next day found him at Mrs. Montgomery's. He had sent up his card, and was waiting her appearance. He looked round the room carelessly. Traces of "Kate" were here and there—in the pretty work-table, on which lay an open book with a filmy handkerchief flung upon its pages, and in the pearl card-case, with a tasseled glove lying by it—the very glove he had picked up the day before. He saw it, and smiled. There were many paintings hung against the walls, and suddenly one of them catching his eye, he rose, uttering an exclamation of surprise. It was a very small picture, and the subject a little weird and wild—just a strip of rocky shore, with gray, tossing waves sweeping into a little cove, and heavy, purple clouds glowering above. Spirited, very, and perfect both in outline and coloring. Evidently the work of no unpracticed hand.

But it was not this which had given rise to

Seymour's exclamation. The scene was the most familiar of the many connected with the by-gone romance. It was the little bay, on the coast of Maine, where Kathie's red cloak had always been his signal among the rocks. When Mrs. Montgomery entered, he was still standing before the painting; and, after the first salutations were over, he began to question her.

"May I ask where it came from?" he said. "I thought no one knew that spot but myself."

"Kate painted it," replied her ladyship, a thought indifferently. "She is always dashing off some little wild scene or other. I don't know where she gets them from. Ah, Kate, here you are to answer for yourself."

Miss Davenant had just opened the door, and stood before them with a great bunch of red roses in her hand. She came forward and laid them on the table, and on her aunt's introduction, extended her hand with the old charming smile. She was glad to meet Mr. Seymour. She had made his acquaintance by reputation long ago. How could picture-lovers thank him for "Ulysses and the Syrens?" There was nothing of straining for effect in

her manner, nothing of anxiety to produce an impression. Simply the grace and elegance of a graceful and elegant woman of the world, who desired to please, and knew how to do it. Witching deference enslaved the senator, her face alone was enough for Tom Griffith, but Carl Seymour stood apart from other men, and she only helped Fate a little with her tender eyes and exquisite voice.

"I have been asking your aunt about this painting," said Seymour, at last. "She tells me you are the artist. It cannot possibly be a fancy picture?"

She looked up at it smiling.

"No," she said. "It is a scene from memory. It was my home once."

Seymour was almost angry with himself for the wild supposition which flashed upon him. And yet the coincidence was so odd. He glanced at the slim hand upon which the sunlight struck whitely, upon the brown, burnished hair, and then at the clear-cut, flawless face. Only the large, heavy-fringed eyes held anything of remembrance for him. The rest was beautiful, but that was all. The subject dropped quietly.

He listened to the soft voice as she talked to him with perfect grace in every word and tone, and as he listened, wondered if the same spell lay upon other men as lay upon him. It was not such a spell as he had imagined it to be—not the witchery of a coquette; something finer, something more like the subtle instinct of a fair woman who had seen the world, and understanding it, still retains her tender sweetness. In this lay the secret of Kate Davenport's success. Every man forgot, in her presence, that other men had seen the same smiles, and heard the same musical inflections of her voice. Carl Seymour forgot this, too. It was hard to realize that such eyes as these could be false; that of this stately, fair-faced girl people had said, "There are men whom her beauty and vanity have driven to worse than death." I am telling a story frankly, and will not profess to hide that Carl Seymour was a better man than Kate Davenport was a woman. The influences upon their lives had been different. The one had seen purity and honor, the other worldliness and the world. So it was that it was easier for Carl Seymour to believe that he had deceived himself, than to



believe that the woman who seemed true could be deceiving him. That he was bitter against worldliness, I have told you, but the memory of a stately, womanly mother, and a true, pure-hearted little sister, in his far-away home, made him readier to be merciful than he would otherwise have been. Kate Davenant, too, was, perhaps, a little truer to herself to-day than she generally was—for there were old memories thrilling her as she watched his handsome, cavalier face. She showed him the collection of art-pets, of which Mrs. Montgomery had spoken. Forgetting the Circe in her natural pleasure at his familiarity with, and interest in them, she lost herself in her animation, and stood with uplifted eyes and soft rose-red on her cheek, as she warmed into enthusiasm over the art he loved so well. She had seen the grand master-pieces of which he spoke, and knew them as well as he did; but there were subtle, tender touches in their grandeur and beauty which she had dreamed of vaguely, but which grew into great, glowing truths under his warmth and eloquence. Carl turned upon her suddenly once, and saw something of his earnestness in her face. Years ago he

had seen the same rapt expression before, and its reproduction made him catch his breath with a swift heart-throb.

Mrs. Montgomery was delighted. This was a lion to boast of; and when he left them, her invitations were even more cordial than before.

"Kate," she said, when the door had closed behind him, "that man is a genius. What a pity he is so abominably poor. Mr. Coyne tells me he has absolutely nothing to depend upon but his art. If it was not for his circumstances, I should say he was exactly the man you ought to marry."

Miss Davenant was toying with a red rose, and she tore it into two pieces, slowly and deliberately, before she gave her answer.

"I don't think he is. Mr. Seymour is a truthful, honest man, and I am not a truthful, honest woman. Besides, as you intimate, intellect and honor are not marketable qualities." And she tossed the rose from her with a little impatient gesture, and taking her card-case from the table, left Mrs. Montgomery alone to her meditations.

Her aunt shrugged her shoulders.

Below, another incident occurred. As Sey-

mour passed through the hall, he caught sight of a blood-red rose lying upon the floor. It had dropped from the handful Kate Davenant had brought into the drawing-room, and because of this he stooped and picked it up. He hardly knew his reason at the time, but long after he remembered it, and remembered, too, the little thrill that passed through him as its rich fragrance floated upward.

## CHAPTER IV.

## I AM WILLING TO TRUST HER.

AFTER this first visit, there came some change into Carl Seymour's manner of living. The world saw more of him, and heard more of him, too, for Mrs. Montgomery sounded the praises of her pet lion far and wide. People liked him, this poor, proud young artist, and courted him, in spite of his poverty.

Women liked his handsome face, and were glad to see it everywhere, even liked his high-bred geniality, and were glad to meet him. Select society came to see the pictures in his rooms, and one or two connoisseurs made flattering comments on them. He had not come to Newport, like the rest of mankind, for recreation; he had come to take advantage of the peculiar scenery, and he worked hard, with a cool sort of immovable energy. In his working hours he contracted a habit of sketching Kate Davenant's face on scraps of paper, and then tearing them up with a half-sneering wonder if he were as weak as the rest. There was a

small bust of Clytie on his mantel-piece—a delicate, pure-faced head, with shoulders rising from the cup of a flower; and this star-faced Clytie he had bought because he fancied it was like Kate Davenant. There was the same soft droop of the lips, the same delicately moulded chin and throat, and the same rich curving ripple of the hair—the curving ripple one always sees on the heads of Greek statuary. He used to stop and look at it sometimes when he was tired, gaining something of inspiration from the calm, snowy face. In society he met Miss Davenant often, and a half-recognized familiarity grew up between them. It was a dangerous position he was in, and all the more so because he was unconscious of its danger. He thought it was only her beauty that attracted him so. He thought his bitterness against the faults people assigned to her would save him and keep him strong; he thought anything and everything but the truth, and so blindly allowed the current of events to sweep him onward to the general vortex.

Mrs. Montgomery had taken a wonderful fancy to him, and exhibited her preference as she never exhibited preference for others.

When she met him in society, she would offer him a seat at her side, and give him the full benefit of her experience, talking to him with a brilliance and apt sarcasm, which were truthful and world-reading beyond measure.

"I like men who have their fortunes to carve out," she said, on one occasion, laying her handsome hand on his shoulder as she looked at a picture that rested upon his easel. "I am tired of people who are born with the silver spoon. Kate is just such a woman as you are a man."

Carl laughed a little, and asked how Miss Davenant was like him.

"In her manner of thinking," said Mrs. Montgomery, "and in her haughtiness and self-reliance. Not that she shows her characteristics. She is too fond of popularity for that, and society keeps her within bounds."

And so Kate was fond of popularity and admiration. Carl thought of "*la belle marquise*" again, and forgot to look at the Clytie once that day. But in the evening he called upon Miss Davenant. He had not intended to do it, at first; but when his stroll brought him opposite Bay View, he changed his mind, and con-

cluded to make the visit. There was a quaintly-carved balcony before the back drawing-room window, and Kate had stepped out upon it, and was watching the sun setting over the low hills toward the fort. She did not know that Seymour had entered. She wore a thin, vaporous white dress, and ruches of delicate white lace closed round throat and wrists. A great golden-hearted lily rested against the thick, dark puffs of her hair, and the last vivid shower of sunbeam floated round her in a light which was almost misty in its intensity. She was bending forward, leaning upon the balustrade, and looking out far away as if she had forgotten herself. Her lips were a little parted, her eyes softly dilated.

Little Kathleen's face had never been so sad as this: but in some way, Seymour felt as if he was near her now. What was she thinking of? This was not the woman men called "the Circe." He stood in unobserved silence for a while, and then some unintentional movement attracted her attention, and she started and turned toward him. Then it was that he saw what he had not observed before. There were unshed tears in her eyes: the fringing lashes were quite wet.

One moment she was half embarrassed, but the next she recovered herself, and came forward with extended hand, comparatively self-possessed.

"I beg pardon," she said, smilingly. "I did not know you were here. I was watching the sunset, and sentimentalizing, thinking of a scrap of poetry I have seen somewhere :

" The golden sunset sheds  
Its glory o'er the sea :  
The dreams of earlier youth come back,  
Come back to me."

He glanced down at her, wondering a little.

"Such thoughts come to us all sometimes," he said. "And, perhaps, these softened moments redeem some few of our past sins."

"Yes," she said, dreamily, looking toward the sunset again. "I was thinking how full our lives are of useless longing and vain regret. I was thinking that if I could only be a little child again—if I could only be a little child again—" Her voice broke off in a sigh, which was half a sob. Then she began again suddenly: "After the first freshness is worn off, the world is—the world, you know ; and profit and loss becomes the rule we worldlings calcu-



late by. I was thinking about this when you came, and—forgot myself. I am glad it was you who surprised me, Mr. Seymour,” with a soft, frank laugh, “and not my aunt. I am not often sentimental, but when I am I don’t wish my matter-of-fact relative to witness the demonstration.”

Carl smiled a little. He could understand that feeling easily.

“You wish to be a child again,” he said, after a silence. “May I ask you where your childhood was spent?”

Her color deepened.

“Yes,” she said, at last, in a low voice. “The little picture, which interested you so, was one of the most familiar scenes of my childhood. I spent at least nine years of my life there.”

“I am glad to hear it,” said Carl. “It happens, strange to say, to be the scene of the one romance of my life.”

“Mr. Coyne told me about it,” said Miss Davenant, hurriedly. “Poor little Kathleen.”

“Why, ‘poor little Kathleen?’” he asked, scanning her curiously. “She was a very happy child in those days.”

"But she must be a woman now. Let me see—as old as I am. Imagine your little charmer a fisherman's or sailor's wife, with a stentorian voice! Did you love her, Mr. Seymour?"

The first part of her sentence had been light and jesting; the last seemed the result of sudden impulse, and her sweet voice sunk almost tremulously as she asked the question. All the blood in Carl Seymour's body seemed to rush to his heart. Doubt and certainty had been battling in his mind, and at the last speech, doubt seemed almost wholly overruled.

"Love her?" he said, with something like passion in his voice. "Love her? I love her still. My pure-hearted, innocent little Kathleen was the first love of my life: sometimes I think she will be the last."

Miss Davenant made no reply at first, but after a silence she spoke again, as if meditatively.

"I am glad you have not forgotten her. I like to think some one has loved her truly. Poor, lonely little Kathleen! (I have always fancied she must have been lonely.) But if

you were to meet her now, Mr. Seymour, with the changes of the past years upon her, do you think she would be 'Kathleen Mavourneen', to you still?"

"Yes," he said. "Kathleen Mavourneen forever."

"If—if——Suppose that circumstances had made her a woman of the world, a woman whose life had been full of worldly scheming, and who was called vain and heartless—what then?"

"She could never be that," he said—"never that wholly. I am willing to trust her."

Kate had taken the lily from her hair, and was pulling it to pieces, flinging the white petals over the balcony, and watching them as they fluttered softly to the ground.

"They say truth is stranger than fiction," she said; "and I believe it is. If I were to tell you that I know something of your little Kathleen, Mr. Seymour—"

"Kate, my dear," broke in a voice from behind them, "is it fair that you should monopolize Mr. Seymour altogether? It is my impression that he called to see me; and, besides, Mr. Colycinth is waiting for you. Have you forgotten your promise to him?"

Kate turned around with a calm, unshaken composure.

"Certainly not," she said. "You will excuse me, Mr. Seymour. I promised to drive with Mr. Colycinth this evening."

Carl bowed, and turned to the aunt. He did not remain long, however. He was moved and excited as he had never been before in his life. What if, at last—at last he had found his child-love again. To some men, the boyish romance would have been merely an amusing incident, pleasant to look back upon; but to Carl Seymour it was more, and might yet rule his whole life. As he strolled homeward, he thought of it all. He could remember now how the memory of the innocent eyes and pure lips had restrained and comforted him; how he had dreamed of the childish face that had once nestled against his breast. The soft, distant sound of the waves brought back to him the time when Kathleen had fallen asleep in his arms, and he had carried her two miles over the shore, looking down at her, and wondering if ever woman or child was so fair as this little maiden. Mark you, it was not of Kate Davenant he was dreaming—it was of

Kathleen Ogilvie. The time had not yet come when he could understand that he loved the woman for what the child had been. Now and again, something rose up before him vaguely, some thought which tried to connect this woman of the world, this Circe, with his child-darling; but in some way he could not make it clear to himself, and so wandered back almost unconsciously to the old romance.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE WOMAN THEY CALLED THE CIRCE.

THE last sunbeam had faded, and the twilight set in, as he reached the Ocean House. Gerald Colycinth's carriage, at that moment, dashed by, and Miss Davenant waved her exquisitely gloved hand to him and smiled. He found Brandon waiting for him. Poor Fred Brandon, in the tightest of boots, and the most remarkable of "get-ups," and looking most abominably doleful. He, too, had been added to the Circe's train. Like Tom Griffith, he had paid ruinous prices for bouquets for Miss Davenant to laugh at.

"I've been to Bay View," he said, dismally. "Got there just in time to see that beggar, Colycinth, drive off with Miss Davenant. Confound it all!"

A month ago, Seymour would have shrugged his shoulders, and drawn down the corners of his handsome mouth; but now he was silent, and—ah! far worse—felt a little pang, for which he could not account. Brandon

grumbled eloquently. First, at the heat; next, at his boots; then at his tailor; but, most of all, at "that muff of a Colycinth." At last he started up to the window, with an exclamation of surprise.

"Here's Carver coming down the Avenue. Mrs. Montgomery's footman, you know. Wonder where he's going! Jove! he's turning in here!"

The correct footman was, indeed, entering the hotel. Carl caught the last glimpse of his blue and drab livery as he passed up the steps.

"What can he be coming for?" said he carelessly. Before he had finished speaking, a slim, cream-colored envelope was handed to him, stamped with a scarlet monogram, and directed in a delicate hand. Carl Seymour's face was generally a calm one, and noticeable for its fine, ivory pallor; but as he opened the note it changed and flushed, and his shapely hand shook a little. The note ran thus:

"DEAR MR. SEYMOUR—Of course, you have received an invitation for the Amateur Concert? If I see you there to-night, I will

show you the woman the world has made of  
'Kathleen Mavourneen.'

KATE DAVENANT."

Brandon looked curiously at his companion, as he folded the note slowly and replaced it in its envelope. The flush had died out of his face and left it colorless, as usual, but his hand was not steady yet, and his lips were half trembling.

"Going to the concert to-night?" he asked, at last.

Brandon nodded, and replied, "That amateur affair, you mean? Yes. Alice Farnham introduced two or three tableaux into the programme, and Miss Davenant is great on tableaux."

Carl hardly heard him. He was thinking of the "woman the world had made of Kathleen Mavourneen."

His wild fancies were proving themselves true, or, at least, he could only place that construction upon the letter he held in his hand. The few intervening hours between its arrival and the concert seemed fairly to drag themselves away. When Brandon had gone, he



went up to his sleeping-room, and watched the twilight deepen and deepen upon the distant sea, until the blue had darkened into purple, and until the purple was hung with dewey-eyed stars, and the great pearl moon swung high in the dome of heaven. Now and again he turned to glance at the Clytie, gleaming whitely where the moonlight struck snowy shoulder and exquisite face. He did not quite understand the thrill, that was almost like a pain as it touched him, and felt half-impatient at it; but still the thrill was there, and in spite of its tenderness, pain lay beneath it.

But at length the hours of waiting were over, and he was seated in the little, crowded theatre. Amateur concerts and entertainments were pretty Alice Farnham's hobby; and she was at the head of the committee who gave this entertainment for the benefit of the family of a disabled soldier. She came to Carl, this pretty Alice, when she saw him, and, bending over his seat, touched him on the shoulder with her fan.

"I am so glad you are here," she said, in her pretty, enthusiastic way. "I want you to see our tableaux. Miss Davenant arranged

them nearly all. Look at your programme, and you will see her name in half a dozen."

Carl looked at the scented trifle of rose-tinted paper and gold lettering, and ran over the list. He noticed one hand in all. The artistic taste and theatrical genius displayed struck him in every fresh title; but when he reached the bottom of the page he started.

"'Kathleen Mavourneen.' Song in costume, by Miss Davenant."

Alice did not see the start, for at that moment a gentleman came to take her behind the scenes.

"The curtain will be raised directly," she said to Carl. "I want you to tell me afterward what you think of 'Louise de Valliere.'"

Five minutes after, the curtain was drawn up. The scene was the interior of a small Gothic chapel. Saints stood in the niches, and angels folded their wings above the stained glass windows. At one end, in the dim, mellow light, a white marble cross stood revealed, and before this cross knelt a woman. This was the chapel of the Carmelites, and the kneeling figure was Louise de Valliere. Her heavy, pall-like, velvet robe swept the tiled

floor behind her; her exquisite eyes were uplifted, full of pleading passion and despair; her hands clung to a rosary, and a richly-bound missal lay beside her, bearing upon its cover the miniature of her lost lover and king. Carl remembered the star-white face and purple eyes long after that, and shuddered as he thought of their despair, and the hollow sound of the tolling convent-bell. When, at last, the curtain fell, the audience broke into a storm of well-bred applause. Every one knew the perfect face, and dark-brown, unbound hair, and Miss Davenant's list of victims swelled to countless numbers.

There seemed to be a great deal of curiosity about the final song. Carl could hear questioning comments on every side. What could be made of "Kathleen Mavourneen?" people asked; in fact, the audience were quite anxious about it. But could the most anxious be more anxious than this man to whom this song was to be the solution of a problem? He waited for it more than impatiently. Every now and then he caught sight of Miss Davenant passing to and fro, smiling and jesting, and listening to the repeated compliments,

with the perfection of good-breeding which was habitual to her, and with her soft, low laugh ringing sometimes like music.

But at length the end of the programme was reached. Seymour was almost glad when the curtain fell upon "King Arthur and Guinevere."

"Last, but not least," said a voice behind him. "'Kathleen Mavourneen.' Song in costume, by Miss Davenant. Now we may expect a *bonbon* of artistic taste."

There was a little pause, a sort of rest for five minutes, in which the audience waited breathlessly, as an eager audience will wait, and then the curtain rose again.

A little, broken hut, all tree-shadowed, a gray, old lichen-covered rock, by the side of a clear, deep-looking spring, and in the softened stage-moonlight a girl standing alone. No expense had been spared to make the scenery natural. Carl knew the picture, and knew the slight, girlish figure resting against the old gray stone. A very slight figure it looked now, in the short, blue skirt and laced bodice, and more girlish than Miss Davenant had ever seemed before. A little scarlet cloak

hung round her, and her hair fell loosely from its hood. Her very face seemed changed, as the soft subdued light fell upon it. For a moment, there was a dead, breathless silence, and then she took a hesitating step forward, and began her song. We all know it—the soft, soft music and tender words. The orchestra, like all the other arrangements, was a piece of perfection, and the low throb of the accompaniment rose like a deeper, fuller echo of every note she sung. Carl leaned forward—he could not help it—and after the first glance, shaded his face with his gloved hand, and only listened. Her little, fair hands hung clasped before her, and the voice that “fell like a falling star” upon the enraptured audience, fell full of unshed tears. Ah! who shall say but that the purest part of her life came back to her then? Who shall say but that if she might only have awakened in the moonlight a child once more, the white angels might have saved her from the fever-dream of the life she had lived? Then it was, but never ‘till then, that Carl Seymour knew all he had lost, and all he had won; then, and not till then, did it come home to him, as a truth, a passionate, living

truth, that this Kate Davenant and Kathleen Ogilvie, who were one and the same, held one and the same place in his heart.

“It may be for years, and it may be forever ;

Ah ! why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart ?”

Then he looked at her and met her eyes, the eyes of child Kathleen, the eyes he had loved all these long years.

The song was ended, and as the last note died away, the spell upon her listeners was broken, and the applause burst forth.

The little theatre had never heard such a tumult before. It swelled, and rang, and echoed again with bravos, and encores, and clappings. The select audience forgot that it was select, and became enthusiastic, and when the fair singer reappeared, bouquets were showered upon her. Carl had only a waxen-cupped camellia, but as it fell at her feet, Miss Davenant stooped and picked it up, and held it in her hand as she repeated her song. And then it was all over, and the crush and tumult of departure began. Carl made his way behind the scenes, and met Alice Farnham.

“Ah, here you are !” said the young lady.

"Miss Davenant is in the manager's room. I think she is expecting you."

"Miss Davenant!" he heard, "Miss Davenant!" on every side among the amateurs; and then he found himself in the little apartment dignified by the title of the manager's room, standing before her—"Kathleen Mavourneen," or Kate Davenant—which? Kate Davenant now, for she had changed her stage-dress, and waited in her graceful trailing robes.

Kate Davenant stood for a moment, and then she forgot herself, and looked up and down, and almost trembled; and the great tears stood in her eyes, and she was silent as though she could not speak. Seymour forgot himself, too. His calm, haughty, emotionless self was lost, and he came to her and took hold of her hands, and held them, and looked down into her eyes, down, down, as no man had ever looked before.

"The woman the world has made of little Kathleen," he said. "I thought I had lost you, mavourneen; and you have come back to me. To me!" he said. "To *me!*"

"What am I to say?" she said, with a little trembling sweetness in her voice. "I am not

Kathleen Ogilvie—I am Kate Davenant, what the world and its worldliness have left of your child, Kathleen."

"I am willing to trust you," was his answer. "Tell me, who wove this web for me?"

"My aunt, as I call her," she said, with the smile again. "But I am really her cousin, by a fiftieth remove. For the sake of the old blood, and my Davenant face, she took me, and amused herself with educating me. Davenant was my father's name, and—and——" the patrician face flushed a little as she hesitated over her speech, "the world never knew that my mother had a right to it; she was but a poor girl of Irish parentage, whom he fell in love with when he was yachting on the coast of Maine, and secretly married."

Carl had not loosened his grasp upon her hands, but just then she remembered herself and dropped them from his clasp.

"I knew you from the first," she said, smiling. "When you gave me my glove at Mrs. Farnham's croquet-party, I recollected your face, and connected it with your name, while you, faithless cavalier, had forgotten all."



"No," he answered, "I had not forgotten, but I could not believe."

Having had time to recover her composure, she was quite Miss Davenant, now. Miss Davenant softened, perhaps, but still the Circe.

"I must find my aunt," she said, her eyes a little downcast, under his steady gaze. "Will you please take me to her?"

He laid her hand upon his arm, and held it in his own until he helped her into her carriage; then, with his farewell, he looked down at her again, as if waiting for something.

The time had come when Miss Davenant had found a controlling power, and her eyelids drooped.

"Come to-morrow," she said, timidly. "I want—I should like to talk to you about old times."

Carl smiled, as she had not seen him smile before; a smile that brought the blood into her cheeks.

"I have found you," he said. "I will not lose you again."

Then the carriage drove off.

"Kate," said Mrs. Montgomery, "that man is not going to make a second Tom Griffith of

himself; and you ought to know better than meddle with edge tools, unless you wish to cut your fingers."

Carl went home to his hotel, and found a moon-beam resting upon the Clytie's face.

"The woman the world has made of Kate Ogilvie," he whispered. "I loved you then, I love you now I will trust you, if I risk my life upon it—darling!"

He bent over and kissed the cold, white shoulder with his passionate lips.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A NEW ONE.

THE next morning, Miss Davenant's maid brought her a new style of floral offering. It was a fragile basket, lined with mosslike, emerald velvet, and full of cool, dewy-looking lilies, with great, golden eyes and waxen leaves, and in their center glowed a blood-red camellia. Kate was dressing lazily when it came, and she only told Lotte to leave it on the flower-stand, without making any comment.

But when the girl left the room, the cheeks, scarcely tinted before, looked like the camellia petals, and a regretful glow burned in her eyes as she took the artistic trifle in her hand.

"I wonder if I am a very wicked woman?" she said. "Perhaps I had better have remained nothing but Miss Davenant to him. If there had never been a Kathleen Ogilvie, my life might have been smoother, or at least more bearable. But I can't look back, and then be content to look forward."

I wonder if you have found out by this time that there was a good and a bad angel in Kate Davenant's life, and that the time had come now when either one or the other must rule forever. Imagine a girl, with every beauty and fascination, given into the hands of such a woman as Mrs. Mortimer Montgomery; a woman who had lived in the world, and for the world, since she escaped from the nursery; who had paused to think of nothing but the luxurious gayety her refinement and wealth were so well able to procure her. If it had not been for the patrician Davenant face, Kathleen Ogilvie might have remained Kathleen Ogilvie; but there was a pleasant *éclat* in playing the part of chaperon to a girl who was likely to carry the world before her. Beyond that she thought of nothing. Kate might be educated, and introduced to society, and then she might marry—*un bon parti*, of course. No other idea had ever occurred to the selfish aunt. Kate had lived a life that would unfit her for any other. Kate had seen belles and beauties making love-matches, and finally sinking into domestic insignificance, mending stockings, sewing on buttons, and adding up

the housekeeping accounts. "Seen," I said. I ought have said, "heard of," for this sort of people fell from Mrs. Montgomery's circle and lapsed into nothingness. Kate had heard these same nonentities discussed, and seen them snubbed, and observed the resigned, tolerant shrug with which society greeted them when they came within range of respectability's eyeglass. "Respectability was very sorry for the girl. It was a great pity. But what could be expected after such an insane match as that?" And then Respectability shrugged its shoulders again, and forgot to recognize the fallen star. Kate had lived among women whose lives were one long struggle to outdo each other in magnificence, and who kept a troupe of French nursemaids in a well-appointed nursery, and "forgot to ask about baby," and called in to see the children twice a week. What do you suppose such an experience could make of such a girl as this heroine of mine? It made of her just such a woman as the rest, just as coolly refined and calculating, only with a little more brains, and a little sting of remorseful longing for something unattainably better, which sometimes made her

life wearisome and galling. Her future was laid before her, a future which her training compelled her to accept, and which was a sort of game in which her white hands moved the pieces. Still, if she must marry a millionaire, this was no reason, she argued, why she should not amuse herself with men who were amusing in spite of their empty pockets. There was an excitement in the whirl that made her a belle and almost a goddess. There was an excitement in the bowing of the *crème de la crème* of penniless Bohemians. When she drove in her carriage through crowded thoroughfares, rough workmen and elegant men turned round alike to gaze after her, and comment upon her flawless beauty; and once, when she had attended a court-ball in Paris, the emperor himself had spoken flatteringly of her. Since her sixteenth year she had been "*la belle Circe*," "*Sylphide*," "*Superbe*;" and now, at nineteen, she laughed at the men who raved about her, and wrote poems in her honor, laughed at them, yet held them in the palm of her delicate, careless hand still. It was only the "*Marquise*" again.

"You were belle *cruelle, rebelle*,  
And the rest of rhymes as well.  
You had every grace in Heaven  
In your most angelic face,  
With the nameless finer leaven,  
Lent of blood and courtly race ;  
And was added, too, in duty,  
Ninon's wit and Bouffler's beauty,  
And la Valliere's '*yeux veloutés*'  
Followed these ;  
And you liked it when he said it,  
On his knees,  
And you kept it, and you read it,  
Belle Marquise."

Just this it was that made the girl color as she looked at the flower-offering. She could understand its meaning, and knew what it would end in. And then—and then (woman of the world as she was, she hesitated a little as the thought came to her), might it not end in some faint pang to herself? There had been times in her life before now when the world had seemed a thought darker after handsome, manly faces had turned away from her, paling in despair, yet showing something of scorn for the fallen idol. But Carl Seymour was different from even the best of these. The man's very soul was strong, and

his power over men, women, and children was his chief characteristic. She had heard his acquaintance talking of him and wondering at his perfect fascination.

"He's such a cool, immobile sort of a fellow!" Tom Griffith had said one day. "But every man he speaks to respects and looks up to him. By George! the very horses in the stable whinny and turn their big, velvet eyes when he lays his hand upon them."

Was not this a trifle dangerous?

Kate leaned her firm, white chin upon her palm, and her purple eyes widened and darkened under their fringes as she thought it over. Why was it that this bondage was her fate? Why was it that the whole sum of her existence lay in the one channel?

"If I were only Kate Ogilvie now!" she exclaimed, almost involuntarily, with her scarlet lips parted wistfully. "If he had only found me little Kate again, innocent and good in spite of all! I might—I might——"

She stopped, and the warm color rushed over her face. She was treading on forbidden ground. She laid the basket upon the table, and rang the bell for Lotte.



"You may dress my hair now, Lotte," she said; "and fasten that red camellia in the puffs with a spray of white coral."

Lotte pulled it all down, the dark-brown, burnished hair, with its heavy braids and soft curves, and began to dress it in discreet silence; and under the gold-dusted mantle the Circe bent her head and watched the marble-cupped lilies, and tried to think she was a girl again, and Carl Seymour had the right to call her "Kathleen Mavourneen."

That evening Mr. Colycinth drove his carriage over the beach alone, for when he had called at Bay View he found the Circe "not at home."

"Gone to the Spouting Horn with Mr. Seymour," said her aunt, with some dissatisfaction apparent in her manner. "Kate has a craze about scenery. Just imagine any one walking a mile over the sands for the sake of getting a good view of sky and water!"

This was anything but satisfactory to the "literary lion." Miss Davenant seldom, if ever, promenaded with her adorers. Was not this a foreboding state of affairs, when she walked a mile with a happy hero?

And in the meantime the Circe forgot herself, strolling over the shining sands, with the shining sea before her, and the shining sky above. The purple water dimpled and whispered, and the evening breeze swept a soft pink into her waxen cheeks, and a soft light came into her eyes. She felt like Kate Ogilvie again, and once or twice a tender, womanly thrill crept over her, as she looked up at her companion's earnest face. As for Carl Seymour, he failed to remember that it was a worldly-wise woman he was talking to, and not an innocent, inexperienced girl. Yellow sands, and sunset sky, and lapping waves, seemed so familiar that he thought only of the years behind, and the child who had lived in them. When they reached the cliffs at last, they found they were the only visitors. Carl leaned against a jutting fragment, and looked down at Miss Davenant's fair face.

"Why did you not tell me at first?" he asked, going on with the conversation.

Kate colored a little.

"It was an impulse that made me tell you at all," she said. "An impulse, and the fact that you had almost found me out."



"But that is not replying to my question. Why was this?"

A wish almost uncontrollable came up into the girl's mind—a wish that was the result of the truth that really lay buried in her heart. If she could only make him understand her position, if he could but just see how utterly impossible it was for the woman to be to him what the child had been. There was a sharp struggle, and then she made a brave trial—a trial that needed a struggle in spite of all.

"Do you recollect what I said to you yesterday afternoon, on the balcony, and what I repeated in the manager's room? Nine years ago I was a child, Mr. Seymour. Now I am a woman, and because I wish to be more frank with you than I am to others, I will tell you again that I am afraid Kate Davenant is very unlike the child you loved so well."

Carl looked down at her flushing face, but he did not speak.

"Do you know what the world says of me, Mr. Seymour?" she went on. "The world says I am a vain, heartless woman, caring for nothing but my own triumphs. Perhaps the world is right, though it may be somewhat

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harsh. Still, you know, a girlhood spent as mine has been, cannot make one very unworldly and single-hearted."

She had looked very unlike the Circe when she began to speak, but she looked wonderfully unlike her, when, coming to the end of the last sentence, she broke forth again, with the hot color flushing her cheeks, and her eyes full of vague bitterness.

"I am saying to you what I have said to no man or woman before. I say it, because as you cared for the lonely little Kathleen, so you may, perhaps, feel an interest in this other Kate, who is lonelier now than ever she was then. Shall I tell you why my aunt took me up? She took me because I had a pretty face; she took me because I was a bright, amusing child, and my beauty was likely to make a belle of me. She took me because she thought I was a good speculation, just as her lions and lionesses are—and she made of me what you see, a beauty, people tell us, and an elegant, worldly-wise belle, according to society's report—Kate Davenant, in short, and not the best woman you know, by any means."

He bent over her, and took both her slen-

der gloved hands in a grasp that was almost painful.

"You ask me to remember what you have told me," he said, with glowing eyes. "Remember what I have said to you, 'Kathleen Mavourneen will be Kathleen Mavourneen forever!' So you are to me."

Then her resolution broke down. She had made such an effort as she was capable of, and it had failed. Perhaps, as she smiled up into Carl Seymour's passionate face, her good angel folded its white wings and wept. She had not learned to be strong in truth, and after this first struggle, she gave herself up, as she had given herself up before, to the current which carried her onward to another's undoing.

When they returned to Bay View, they found a gay company gathered there. Mrs. Montgomery's eyebrows were uplifted a little, as the two sauntered in, the Circe's eyes uplifted softly to her companion.

Tom Griffith looked at Brandon, and collapsed. The senator became magisterially grave, and one or two of the "fast" men began to comment.

"This is a new one, ain't it? How new? About six weeks old. Poor fellow!"

Carl remained for the evening. Kate chatted and laughed with all. But Carl did not understand—nay, it was impossible for him to understand the truth—that the gayety and carelessness had a touch of desperation in it. He did not dream of the vague, passionate aching that lay behind the brilliant repartee and laughter; and the almost mad emphasis that urged Kate Davenant to jest and merriment, when the heart that seemed to beat so calmly beneath her trim bodice was stung with blind regret. Once, when he spoke to her in a sort of forgetfulness, and called her by the old name, "Kathleen," when he had said it, he stopped and smiled at his carelessness.

"Forgive me!" he said. "I forgot there are nine years behind us. Am I very impertinent?"

"No," she replied, impulsively. "I like to hear it. I wish you would call me Kathleen always. It is like oil upon troubled waters," she added, with a laugh that was almost bitter in its recklessness.

Hitherto Miss Davenant's flirtations had rejoiced in one peculiarity; their advance had been almost imperceptible, and one victim had hardly seemed more honored than another. But this evening the rule was broken, and Mr. Seymour's position attracted comment. The purple eyes seemed to turn to him as if unavoidably, the sweet face to answer his every expression. Alice Farnham had Tom Griffith all to herself, and Brandon was left to mourn alone, while the senator, the poor senator, and the rest of the train, could only stand aloof with a united expression of stolid misery and resigned despair.

When the company separated, and Carl had spoken his last "Kathleen," Miss Davenant did not wait to hear her aunt's eloquence on her dangerous proclivities, but went up stairs to her room.

"Please send me some strong coffee, aunt," she said. "I have a headache."

"You will kill yourself with strong coffee, Kate. It is a sort of intoxication with you." Whereupon Kate shrugged her shoulders indifferently, and smiled.

After the strong coffee, there were notes to

be read, and replies to make—and Kate set to work upon them with uncalled-for energy ; and when they were done, she undressed and tried to sleep. But sleep would not come. The murmur of the distant sea came up to her moaningly, and made her restless ; and her thoughts kept her feverishly wide awake. At last she sprung up, threw on a wrapper, and going to the window, looked out. The deserted grounds lay below, breathing up the perfume of the sleeping flowers, and whispering under the night-wind softly. Through the dark trees came a silvery shimmer of moonlight. She watched it all in a dreamy silence for awhile, and then suddenly turned away, and coming to the dressing-table, opened a little jewel-case, and took out a chain of sea-shells, and a chain of gold, and laid them by the side of the red camellia. It was a curious thing she was going to do, but a great deal depended upon it.

“I will try once more,” she said to herself. “Once more, and for the last time. If Fate guides my hand to the gold—so be it.”

She retreated a few steps backward, then turned round with closed eyes, and stood still.



She was smiling lightly, and, perhaps, a little satirically, but her heart was beating, nevertheless, with a fierce, pained beat. Did she then care so much? A half struggle, a step forward, her white hands fluttered over the curious omens of her future, and then descending, touched—what? She turned her face again, paling and blushing. The spirit of flower and shells melted away, and a slight shiver passed over her. She had touched the gold.

She laughed a short, impatient laugh as she crushed shells and chain back into the case.

“There were two chances against one,” she whispered, sharply. “I suppose it is Fate!”

## CHAPTER VII.

## WITH THE STREAM.

"WHAT do you think of it?" asked Brandon, doubtfully.

Capt. Loftus, who was this young man's oracle, and was obliging enough to borrow his money and smoke his cigars, held a glass of fine old Madeira to the light, and criticised its color with the air of a connoisseur.

"How old are you, my boy?" he asked.

Brandon stared.

"Twenty-two," he said, with a little extra color on his honest, fair face.

"Thought so," moralized the captain. "At twenty-two I was guileless—it is a long time back, though—but I got over that in the course of time, as you will. Now I understand arithmetic, and experience teaches me that, in sensible people's eyes, Seymour's talent and far-off fortune won't stand in exchange and barter against the Circe. You have seen rare paintings in collections of art wearing the green ticket, haven't you? I am not good at com-

parisons generally, but I never see such pictures without thinking of some of our belles. Kate Davenant was one of them, and her owner (see her aunt) has marked her at a higher price than Seymour can afford to give for years to come; and in years to come the gilt would be worn off the frame, and the picture might not be considered worth the prize.

*Comprenez vous, mon enfant ?* ”

“ But if she loves him ? ”

The captain laughed.

“ A sentiment of two decades again. If Miss Davenant had been the susceptible Miss Brown, or the adorable Miss Smith, the tender passion might be a ruling consideration; but Miss Davenant is a wise woman—a woman of *our* world, which is not the world of Brown, Jones, and Robinson. Picture the Circe anxious about the rise of mutton, and interested in the fall of beef. Imagine the woman, whom report says royalty has pronounced ‘*charmante*,’ with Vanity Fair in the background, and domestic felicity in Blank Street for a future. What a fall would be there, oh my youthful countryman! Miss Davenant knows better.”

“ Well, then,” exclaimed Brandon, reddening—

ing to the very roots of his blonde hair, "it's—it's a confounded shame she should lead him on so. I've been as spoony as any one myself, but I am not such a deep fellow as Seymour, and I know I felt bad enough about it—and what will it be to him. Every one knows he loves the very dead leaves her feet have trodden upon. It has changed him altogether. Every picture he paints has some tint or expression that belongs to her. People say that 'Louise la Valliere,' with her face, is a masterpiece; and there is one he calls 'Kathleen Mavourneen' (taken from that scene she acted in at the amateur concert), has got something in it that I am afraid to look at. By Jove! it makes me tremble. His very soul is laid bare in it."

Loftus laughed a short, recklessly-sounding laugh.

"You haven't seen that sort of thing before?" he said. "I have. Women don't stand at broken hearts in these days. A girl of the Davenant pattern made me what I am. Forty thousand a year bought her. I couldn't. If I could, I might have been a respectable *pater-familias* now, with some pretty little girls of

my own to take care of and try to save from being put up at auction. Well, well! three-score-and-ten is the end of it all—and we live fast in this generation. But I am sorry for you, my boy. How did you manage to have your eyes opened?"

"It wasn't anything of a joke to me, I can tell you," was the half sheepish reply. "I knew I had no chance against Seymour, but I told her the truth, one night, because I couldn't help it. I think she was sorry for me. She said she was, and that I must forget it, and try to love a better woman."

"Tender-hearted creature!" sneered Loftus. "How terribly she must have suffered! I wonder how many other fools—excuse me—have received like consolation."

"Don't speak like that," broke out poor Brandon. "I know I'm a fool, but I haven't quite outlived it yet; and I can't let any one sneer at her. My mother says" (the good-natured youngster hadn't outlived his mother yet) "that good mothers make good daughters. Kate Davenant's mother died when she was born."

Loftus forgot to sneer again. Something of

his heart that was seared twenty years back, stirred in him as he laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"You are a good-hearted fellow," he said, with a new warmth on his face. "And you ought to love a better woman than Kate Davenant. Try to get over it, and let me tell you one thing. Try to keep your heart fresh, and don't live so that the time will come when you look back and shudder, and look forward and see only six feet of earth and nothingness. That is what my youth has led me to."

What Brandon had said was true. Because he had loved no other woman, Carl Seymour loved this Kate as none had loved her before. A calm, haughty-spirited man forgets himself entirely when he meets his destiny. Kate Davenant was his destiny. Every picture he touched wore some unconsciously inwrought charm that belonged to her. One, her heavy, dark brown hair, with its metallic sheen and sparks of fiery gold; another, her red, red lips; another, the purple of her eyes, and the exquisite, touching smile. She had become an inspiration to him, and the Clytie on the mantle had grown to his very soul. Here she

knelt in the dim cloister of the Carmelite Convent as "*la Valliere*," there she stood erect in her war-chariot as grand-eyed Boadicea, with crowds of shaggy-haired, wild-faced Iceni-ans gazing upon her with fierce, hungry eyes. People recognized the Guinevere, who knelt at Arthur's feet, her coiling tresses trailing over her outstretched arms upon the marble floor, and the "Court Lady," who held the cross before the dying soldier, won its hundreds because the man who bought it loved the eyes that lived upon it.

Mrs. Montgomery had become dissatisfied, and Carl had learned to understand that a little indescribable coldness lay between himself and his former admirer. Kate let herself drift on wherever the current carried her. She had grown hardened and careless to the pain and happiness that grew upon her day by day. She knew where it must all end, and only tried to delay what must come at last. Sometimes her bitterness struggled above all, and leaped out; and sometimes the delicious draught she was drinking, for the first time in her life, was so sweet, so maddeningly sweet, that the bitterness was overruled, and she shut her heart

to every remembrance of the unwomanly wrong she was doing.

She came in upon her aunt one day with some fairy-web sea-weed in her hand. Her eyes were drooping, and her lips curved softly in a dreamy absent-mindedness. There was a little boat down in the bay that bore her name, and for the last hour she had held the tiller and steered to Carl Seymour's rowing, as they floated in the golden mist that rested upon the waters. There was sea and sky before, and the purple rocks and the world behind. And in the lapses of dreaming thought that came upon her, Kate had wished, that they might drift onward forever, and lose themselves in the crimson and gold beyond. When she entered the parlor, she was thinking of his face as he had looked at her in silence. Just what a man's face will say sometimes to a woman, his face had said to her, and, perhaps, hers had answered him a little. She loved him. She had not hidden that from herself from the first, and once or twice it was too much for her, and the whole truth shimmered in the soft rose on her cheek, and the drooping of the heavily-fringed white lids. He had not spoken,



he had only rested upon his oars, and let the boat drift as he watched her averted face; and she could not forget—she thought she never could forget—the faint, passionate trembling of the mouth that was usually so calm.

Mrs. Montgomery looked up, as she came in, with a cold inquiry in her manner.

“Where have you been,” she asked.

“Sailing with Mr. Seymour,” answered Kate, indifferently, as she drew off her gloves.

There was a silence for a few moments, in which she lay the sea-weed among the rest of her collection. As she turned to leave the room, her aunt spoke again.

“When you have changed your dress, I wish you would come down stairs again. I want to speak to yon.

Kate turned back with a calm smile.

“I can stay just as well now,” she said.  
“What is it you wish to say.”

Her aunt stitched at her embroidery energetically, and then she looked up.

“Kate,” she said, “I am going to say what I have said a thousand times before. You are going too far.”

Kate's eyebrows were uplifted nonchalantly, but she made no reply.

"In this case," proceeded the lady, "you are going too far for your own comfort. You are not sentimentally inclined by any means; but you know as well as I do that this man is more to you than any other man has ever been. I don't wonder at it, either. He is a man a great deal above his position, and, of course, it is a pity; but still you ought to be wise enough to know better than allow yourself to think of him seriously. Flowers, and poems, and pictures, are all very well; but a man can't use his eyes and his brains, as this man is doing, without making some impression. He kissed your hand last night. I saw him. And when you were waltzing together, you could no more have lifted your eyes to his face than you could have done anything else impossible. You know what your position is, and you know—well, you know that this sort of thing won't do."

It would be a hard matter to try to describe the various expressions that passed over Kate Davenant's countenance as she listened. First it was haughty defiance, then bitter, bitter

scornfulness, and at last coldness perfectly immobile.

"Yes," she said, "I know that this 'sort of thing won't do.' I know my position as well as you know it, and understand it as thoroughly. I know what my life has fitted me for, and I know that I must prepare myself for the future lying before me. We have talked of this before, I believe, and it has always ended in the same thing. Thank you for reminding me of my danger; but, as you say, I am not a sentimental woman, by any means, and I am not likely to swerve on the side of romantic weakness. Excuse my being a trifle bitter. Probably I *was* forgetting, and allowing myself to dream such dreams as only better and richer women may indulge in."

Her aunt shrugged her shoulders resignedly.

"I didn't think it was so bad as this," she said, satirically. "I must say you *are* a trifle bitter. Of course, it is no affair of mine. Perhaps, on the whole, you had better marry Mr. Seymour, if you can make up your mind to conversations with the butcher, and eloquence from the baker. In the course of ten years, I dare say, he will be a celebrated artist, and in

the mean time, you know, you could retire from society, and superintend your two servants, and have your dresses made by a third-rate *modiste*. You would not miss your acquaintance, after a while, and it is not so very dreadful to be snubbed—and then, you know, what are these trifling sacrifices to domestic felicity?"

"Is that all you wish to say?" asked Kate, after the minute's silence that followed her ladyship's harangue. "If it is, I think I will go up stairs now. You know we dine at the Farnhams, and I should like to rest before dressing."

"Well, it isn't quite all," was the reply. "I wanted to tell you that Mr. Crozier called this evening, and inquired about you particularly. I said he would meet us at Mrs. Farnham's to-night."

Kate paled slightly.

"I did not know he had come to Newport," she said.

"He arrived yesterday. Kate, how foolish you were to refuse that man. He is worth two millions."

"Was I?" said Kate. But perhaps, it is not

too late yet," and she laughed a short, reckless laugh, that was a little terrible.

Her aunt did not say anything. She knew her fair niece well enough to understand that it was best not to interfere with her in these moods.

Kate went to her room in a curious frame of mind, and sat down and looked matters in the face. That she loved Carl Seymour she knew, but her love was not like his; it could not reconcile her to all things for his sake. Her experience had not been calculated to make her understand that the time would come when sacrifice would be as nothing. A blind instinct gave her the tender, womanly thoughts that thrilled her, but the motives that had ruled her life held her back with a cold hand. She was bitter and restive under her bondage, but she could not break it. She had laughed at sentiment since her girlhood, and for nine years had thought of nothing but the one ending to her belledom, for which her far-seeing relative had educated her. But wise as she was, Mrs. Montgomery had not foreseen this. She had felt no qualms of conscience and gall-ing regret, there had been no struggle for mas-

tery between heart and head in her days, and so she now only regarded Kate's impulses of rebellion as symptoms of "blues," and accordingly had felt no concern.

It did not occur to her that the ten innocently childish years could not fail to leave their traces behind. Those ten years had left traces.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE GRAND MOGUL.

BEFORE Kate had been seated for five minutes, she sprung up from her chair and paced the floor backward and forward, trying to forget herself. Her aunt's sarcasm had been a bitter truth to her, and she felt that she had almost reached the end of her tether. What had she done? Nothing wrong, she tried to think—nothing more than she had done a hundred times before, only before no suffering had been entailed upon herself. Now she must suffer, as she had made others suffer; now her dainty feet must tread the same thorny path other feet had trod for her sake. Perhaps her aunt had been right in saying she was foolish in refusing Mr. Crozier, when, two years ago, he had offered her marriage. If she had married him then, by this time she would have learned to wear her fetters gracefully, and certainly she would have been spared this pain. Her aunt's maxim on love was a concise and

striking one, and one which always acted as her text.

"It is all very pretty to talk about, my dear," she had said a thousand times to her niece. "But whatever motive you may marry from, you will find, in the end, that I speak truly. Years will warm the coldest love to friendship, and cool the warmest to the same sentiment." And Kate at last believed it. For three months she floated with the current in a sort of blindly determined resistlessness, and now she must put forth her strength and battle against it. Very well.

She walked across the floor slowly, listening with an acute sensation to the soft, rustle of her trailing dress, and endeavoring to fix her mind calmly.

But it was a vain endeavor. There was no calmness, nothing but chaos, and a sting of self-contempt that rose above all. Every moment it grew stronger. When a woman reaches self-contempt she has reached the acme of bitterness. Kate Davenant did not pause to think, she would not pause. She loved this man, and yet was not true enough to brave sacrifice for him. She hated herself for it, felt



a vague scorn through every fibre, and yet had no other thought but that she was powerless against herself. What do you think of her? You think that Carl Seymour might have better loved a truer woman, and that if he lost her, his loss was hardly great. Yes; but then think of the "might have been;" think of the beautiful possibilities of truthfulness and faith that had been crushed out of her life. Try to imagine what she would have been, untrammelled by the world. We don't blame a flower for what the soil and the gardener's training have made it.

A rap at the door stopped Kate's restless walk, and Lotte entered with a note and two bouquets. One was a fragrant lemon-blossom, white bell syringæ, and trailing with delicate vines; the other, a gorgeous tropical blooming of rare exotics, glowing with winy-crimson, purple, amber, and dark, glossy green. She knew where the first came from before she glanced at the card that accompanied it. Mr. Seymour was not a demonstrative man, and his gifts were unlike the gifts of others, in the peculiarity of being accompanied only by a slim card bearing his name.

Miss Davenant had quite a collection of them, and, in accordance with some whim, kept them apart from the notes of the slain, locking them in her jewel-case.

"With the rest of my gems," as she said, laughingly, to Carl on one occasion.

"Who brought the other?" she asked Lotte.

Lotte did not know. It was a strange footman; but here was the note.

Kate opened it with a half-amused and slightly contemptuous smile. She knew the crest which Mr. Crozier never lost an opportunity of displaying; and she knew the handwriting, whose flourishes never failed to suggest business, like blue bills and legal parchment.

Mr. Crozier was a banker; Mr. Crozier had some sort of rumored interest in the East Indies. Mr. Crozier was a millionaire, if not a billionaire. Twenty years ago, when Mr. Crozier was a clerk at Cent Per Cent & Co.'s, Mrs. Montgomery had been in the habit of looking upon him with something of the feeling with which one might regard a minute insect; but now—ah, now! Mr. Crozier was a sort of modern Midas.

"John Crozier," the note was signed; and even the curly tails of the capital letters held a suggestion of unlimited wealth, giving one a very pleasant sense of the ease with which John Crozier could sign a check. It made Miss Davenant smile. Once upon a time, the housekeeper had shown her a butcher's account, and she recollected as an amusing coincidence that Ephraim Brisket's style of calligraphy was not unlike her adorer's. But then Ephraim Brisket was not a millionaire.

"You have no need to go down stairs again," said the young lady to Lotte. "I am ready to be dressed now."

Lotte went about her work briskly. She was a merry little maiden, with languishing eyes and scarlet lips, and tasty as a fairy, understanding how to manage to advantage every changing tint of Miss Davenant's delicate face. Kate always gave herself into Lotte's hands, with a careless confidence that each costume she turned out would be more exquisite than the last.

When she had finished dressing mademoiselle's heavy braids, she bent over to the white bouquet, and drew from it a spray of waxen

japonicas and a pale-green vine. Then Miss Davenant lifted her hand and quietly pushed them aside. Lotte was only a lady's maid, and could not understand why Mr. Seymour's flowers should be rejected to-night. Miss Davenant had worn them all the summer, and had smiled and blushed at the quick-witted girl's tact. Now she did not blush. Lotte almost fancied she grew a shade paler as she pushed them aside.

"Not those, this evening," she said, quietly. "I am going to wear your favorite black lace, and you know scarlet is the most becoming accompaniment. Take something from the other bouquet."

Lotte's languishing eyes opened very wide, but she said nothing. It was not usual for Miss Davenant to interfere with her tastes. She must have quarreled with the fair-faced monsieur with the divine mustache. Alas!

When Kate made her appearance in the parlor, her aunt experienced a sensation of relief. Kate had evidently recovered from her "blues," and was going to be sensible. The rich black lace swept in a yard of train upon the carpet, and the thorough-bred throat and

shoulders, and superb arms, gleamed through it whitely, like bits of perfect statuary. Her face was dazzling white and vivid carnation, and the scarlet cardinal flowers in the rich brown braids flung out every delicate tint artistically.

Mrs. Montgomery made no remark. She knew better, and, besides, she recognized the flowers, and was satisfied that her sarcasms had struck home.

When they entered Mrs. Farnham's drawing-room, the Circe created a sensation, as she always did. Some poetical adorer had said of her that she was a tropical blossom, constantly unfolding new leaves, each petal more beautiful than the last. So it was that people who had seen her before were anxious to see her again, and those who had never seen her were anxious to behold the woman of whom rumor said so much. Only a few moments, and the celebrities began to form a little cluster round her. Fred Brandon was not there; but Tom Griffith was, looking pale and cadaverous as any modern Hamlet; and then there were a thousand and one others, who stopped in their passage across the room to catch a tone of

the sweet voice, or a gleam of the exquisite smile.

Her eyes wandered over the assembly in a languid search for somebody. Carl seldom joined the train, and somehow she had learned to watch for his coming as she never watched for any one else. At last, when the eyes found him, the soft, regular heart-beat quickened a little. He was leaning against the marble mantel, looking at her with the old calm searching in his face. He had looked at her a thousand times before with just the same thought ; but now she could not meet his gaze fearlessly, and her eyelids drooped.

She wondered if he had noticed the flowers in her hair, and if he had noticed them, how he had accounted for them. She felt as if their crimson burnt her cheek: and when one of the glowing leaves touched her, she positively shivered. Yet, in the mean time, she fluttered her rose-leaf of a fan, and lifted her soft, serene eyes to Tom Griffith's face, and smiled him into a seventh heaven of delight.

"The 'Grand Mogul' has come back, Miss Davenant," said this young gentleman at last. (The "Grand Mogul" signified Mr. Crozier.)

She shrugged her white shoulders and laughed. The "Grand Mogul" was a sort of lion, as regarded bullion, and everybody knew him. Society discussed his millions, and courted him. Years before, society would have pronounced him a herculean snob, but now society knew better, and received him as a respectable fact, without making any inquiries.

"It is fortunate to be the Grand Mogul," said Kate. "But where is he, Mr. Griffith? I understood we were to meet him this evening."

Mr. Griffith did not know. He had not seen him as yet. And then he stopped short, and looked down at the fair face as if a new thought had struck him. People had a habit of speculating upon Miss Davenant, and poor Tom, who was more in love than the rest, speculated with more interest. Rumor said that John Crozier, Esq., was looking out for a wife; and rumor also said that it would not be John Crozier, Esq.'s fault if, eventually, his home did not find a mistress in Mrs. Montgomery's beautiful niece. Now Tom Griffith believed in this Kate as implicitly as if she had been an innocent *debutante*. If, at last, she married John Crozier, he would be quite content to

anathematize her aunt as the root of the wrong, and regard the Circe as a heart-broken sacrifice. So now, as he noted the feverish sparkle in the girl's eyes, and the impatient ring in her voice, he felt something like pity for her, and showed it in his handsome, honest face. I wonder if you will understand me when I tell you that Kate Davenant felt a sort of anxiety about the absence of her quondam lover? She did not quite understand the feeling herself, and only accounted for it as being a wish that the first meeting was over.

But at last Mrs. Montgomery appeared, keen-eyed and stately, and a faint color showed itself on Kate's cheeks, as she recognized the gentleman her ladyship piloted with such evident satisfaction. He was a tall, burly man; so tall and burly, indeed, that he could not fail to attract attention. Neither particularly handsome, nor particularly unprepossessing, but with the bull-dog, business-like looking face which is peculiar to men of the same class.

"Ah! here she is!" said Mrs. Montgomery, catching sight of her niece. "Kate, my dear, here is Mr. Crozier."

There was nothing of the heart-broken sac-



rifice in Miss Davenant's manner, as she greeted the gentleman with the old, soft smile and graceful air. To tell the truth, she was so perfectly the Circe that Tom was not a little astonished. Mrs. Montgomery had been talking to Mr. Crozier, and like a wise matron had given him some little encouragement, which he would not have been likely to receive from Kate, so he felt pretty well at ease. He was not a sentimental man, and besides, he could afford to be off-hand and indifferent. He had proposed to Kate two years ago, because he wanted an aristocratic, handsome wife—and she was the handsomest and most aristocratic he could find. He had made his money, and like the generality of men like him, who have done the same thing on the same principle, had a due sense of its power and importance. If he could not marry Kate Davenant, he could marry somebody else; but still he would rather have Kate Davenant. There would be more *éclat* and triumph about such a conquest. Kate knew this as well as other girls like herself knew it, and knew also that she who wore the millions must win them; and so, as Mr. Crozier seated himself at her

side, she turned her aristocratic face toward him, and smiled just as she had smiled at Carl Seymour before.

"Well," said Alice Farnham, in the course of her chatter to Carl, "if Mrs. Montgomery hasn't taken that abominable Mr. Crozier to bore Kate. They do say he wanted to marry her, though I don't know how true the report is. I wonder if she would accept him? I know those flowers she is wearing came from him. Mamma's maid told me so."

Carl smiled as he looked across the room: but the next moment the smile died away. He had not noticed the flowers before, and as he caught sight of them an unaccountable chill struck him. She had worn his flowers heretofore, and now the red petals drooped and kissed her white throat as she bent forward, her eyes a little downcast, talking to the millionaire. I have said before that Seymour was not a demonstrative man, nevertheless he bit his lip fiercely as he turned to Miss Farnham again.

"Mr. Crozier is considered a good match," the young lady went on, complacently. "And somebody told me that Miss Davenant——"

But just then the stir and bustle drowned the rest of the sentence. The company were proceeding to dinner, and Carl saw Mr. Crozier rise, bowing, and then Miss Davenant's hand was slipped into his burly arm, and they passed out of the room together.

"How much would you give for Seymour's chance now?" said Brandon to the Loftus oracle. The captain had been fastening his glove, and the button had burst from the kid and come off in his hand. He looked across the room at Carl Seymour, and then at the last sweep of the Circe's lace train.

"Look here!" he said, giving the broken fastening a cool toss into the air. "I would not risk that upon it!" And the button fell upon the carpet and rolled away.

## CHAPTER IX.

## OUR SUMMER IS OVER.

A MONTH after this, and the autumn was paling toward winter. There were people at Newport still, but it was not so gay as before. It was too cold for picnics, and often too windy for safe sailing, and the visitors who lingered behind were preparing to leave for New York, or Boston, or Philadelphia. Some people there were who were glad the summer was over, and some looked back upon it as a pleasant remembrance. "Mrs. Grundy" had derived a great deal of amusement from the observations taken in the four months. There had been plenty of room for the criticism in which "Mrs. Grundy" delighted. There had been "fast" men, and "fast" young ladies, who caused the respectable, figurative matron much righteous indignation; and, above all, there had been—Miss Davenant.

"The way that young person acted," moralized Mrs. Grundy, "was almost disgraceful. The way the men used to rave about her, and

the ridiculous poetry and nonsense they used to write, was absurd. And then think how she treated the artist, you know."

This was what Mrs. Grundy said, and many people agreed with her. Society had always been apt to criticise Miss Davenant, but during the last two months of her stay at Newport discussion had been very busy. Not that it was an easy matter to criticise the young lady. On the contrary, she carried her fair face and statuesque head calmly aloft throughout everything. But still there was a great deal to be said. John Crozier, Esq., had sent to Paris and brought out a miniature phæton, and a couple of cream-colored ponies hardly bigger than rats, and on the strength of his position as *fiancé* (so said rumor), had placed them at Miss Davenant's disposal. But however mythical that statement might be, it was certain that John Crozier, Esq., had sent to New York for a purple-velvet lined carriage (purple was the Circe's color), with fiery, prancing horses, and had driven slowly down the avenue, with Miss Davenant's fair, patrician face thrown into strong relief as she leaned against its cushions.

Mrs. Montgomery looked on with complacent interest the while, smiling sagaciously and saying nothing.

When they had returned home, the evening of the Farnhams' dinner-party, Kate had lingered in the parlor a little while, talking to her aunt about Mr. Crozier.

"Then you don't find him so very insufferable, after all?" her aunt had said, suggestively.

Kate shrugged her shoulders, with a smile, half bored, half contemptuous.

"Not so very insufferable with the millions, you know. But otherwise——" and her large, calm eyes dropped indifferently.

"Don't be so sarcastic," said her aunt. "Once for all, Kate, if he proposes to you again, will you accept him or not? You are nearly twenty years old now, and after twenty it is as well a woman should be married."

Kate's heart gave a fierce bound. Twenty years! What had she done with them? Twenty of the fairest pearls slipped forever from the chain of life that God had given into her hands! Just for that moment it seemed as if the careless words had thrown a flare of

light upon her heart, the next the light died away, and left her coldly careless.

"Once for all," she said, "if Mr. Crozier proposes to me again, I will be his wife."

In Carl Seymour's mind there had gradually grown up one predominant feeling of bitter contempt for Kate. Could it be that he had loved such a woman as this all these years? Could such a childhood have grown into such a ripening? He could hardly believe it. He battled against the truth with a fierce, determined trust that was wonderful. But at length the time came when he ceased to dream over little Kathleen's pictures, and shut them out of sight.

Just at the ending of this last month, there was a dark, dreary, foggy day, in which an impulse brought him to a full revelation.

He had been alone in his room all the morning, employing himself in making the preparations necessary before his return to New York. The yellow fog thickened and darkened outside, like a heavy curtain drawn by some unseen hand, while the star-faced Clytie rose from her flower cup like a sweet ghost of the summer dreams that were dying away.

Carl did not look at the Clytie often now, and when he did, he only thought of it as a beautiful, cold, dead surface, from which the old charm of truth and soul had fled forever.

Before he had begun his work this morning, he had come to a determination, and now he had finished, he was going to carry it out.

The last picture was laid aside, the last book packed, and there was nothing more to do.

He looked round the room, with a curious lingering in his eyes, at the dead flowers upon the table, at the lily-set Clytie. Then he went out and closed the door behind him. He was going to Bay View.

It was not pleasant walking outside, for the dull, October fog hung heavily and drearily before him, almost blinding him. It was a week since he had seen Kate; and when he saw her, she was riding by Mr. Crozier's side, and it was the vague unrest in her eyes that had made him determine to go to her once more, and for the last time. Since the night when she had worn John Crozier's flowers, the breach between her and Carl had widened into a gulf which seemed almost impassable. In one short month his love for her had changed



into bitter distrustfulness. Sometimes he had thought that, even if at last the golden apple was his, it would turn to ashes upon his lips. He hardly intended to ask her for anything this morning; he only wished to bid her good-by; but still beneath all lay a faint throb of hope, which he did not acknowledge to himself.

When he entered the parlor at Bay View, he found Mrs. Montgomery alone. The mist had almost made the room dark; but the great, glowing fire flung out a warm light, that had a gleam of kindly comfort in itself.

Mrs. Montgomery laid her work aside smilingly, and extended her hand to him. She was so glad to see him! Where had he been hiding himself? Visitors were a rarity in these days.

"I have been busy," said Carl, stroking Kate's Italian greyhound on its satiny head. "We 'working-classes' must place business before pleasure, you know."

Mrs. Montgomery took up her work again, ignoring the latter part of the sentence.

"When do you return to New York?" she asked.

"To-morrow," answered Carl. "I came to make my farewells to-day."

"Ah!" quietly responded Mrs. Montgomery, as she sewed. "Then you leave before us. I should have gone last week, but one of Kate's whims detained me."

"Where is Miss Davenant?"

"Enjoying herself, somewhere, out-of-doors. Imagine such a thing on a day like this. There is no accounting for Kate's fancies. She said she was tired of staying in the house, and so wrapped up and went out."

Carl was silent, and a little stillness fell upon them. The lady's needle glittered in the firelight like a fairy spear, as it flew backward and forward, but her face was singularly unreadable. She liked this handsome young artist, but she did not like his interference with her plans. To tell the truth, she thought him not a little presumptuous. He had aimed rather too high. Would it not be as well to give him a hint in time? She did not fear for Kate's decision now, but she did not feel quite certain that the path would be so smooth, if this presuming young man became troublesome. She was a business-like woman, and a

cool woman, and she went about her work in a cool and business-like manner.

"Has Mr. Crozier called upon you yet?" she asked.

"Mr. Crozier has not called," Carl replied, coolly.

"He was so anxious to see the picture you called 'Kathleen Mavourneen.' They say it is like Kate, you know, and I believe he wished to buy it."

The color rose to Carl's forehead. He could understand what this implied, and so answered, a little haughtily, that the picture was not for sale; that he had painted it with Miss Davenant's kind permission for his own pleasure.

But Mrs. Montgomery received the information very placidly.

"Oh! I beg pardon. You must excuse me, but Mr. Crozier naturally felt a great interest in the picture, you know."

If Carl had not been too thoroughly aroused, he would have been amused; as it was, he repressed the inclination to say something rude, and went on stroking Fidele, merely bowing indifferently, and answering,

“Certainly.”

But Mrs. Montgomery was not to be baffled. The young man, having made a mistake, must be set right in one way or another; and one plan having failed, it was easy enough to change base.

“Mr. Griffith left Newport a few days ago,” she said, “I am glad to say.”

“Glad to say?” repeated Carl. “Poor Tom!”

“Perhaps I ought not to have said that; but he was so foolish about Kate. Of course, he was of a good family, and all that sort of thing, but then he should have known better. Poor Kate was almost distressed about it. He bored her to death. But, you see, women as handsome as she is, generally have little annoyances of that kind.”

The blood that had warmed Seymour’s face left it colorless, and a spark of contempt lighted his eyes. This was a phase of treatment that was new to him. He had met with respect and admiration on all sides; now this calm, business-like woman of the world was trying to show him that his place was not here.

“Of course, you have heard everything be-

fore this," the lady went on, placidly. "You see, Mr. Crozier was half engaged to Kate before he went back to China, two years ago, and now she is older——"

Perhaps it was fortunate for Mrs. Montgomery's placidity and Carl's equilibrium that the sentence was broken off, for broken off it was, as the door opened, and Kate, in furs and velvet, made her entrance.

She had not been very brightly tinted at first, but when she caught sight of Carl, all the faint color flew from her face and left it deadly pale. She actually staggered and leaned against the table when she reached it.

"The cold has been too much for me," she explained, in answer to her aunt's surprised inquiry.

"Don't you think you ought to shake hands with me, Mr. Seymour? You are quite a stranger," she said directly, rallying; and she extended her gloved hand with a faint, sweet smile.

Then she seated herself on the lounging-chair by the fire, and leaned back, and Carl had time to see that even the crimson cushions had not glow enough to tinge her white cheeks.

It seemed as though she tried to resist the impulse to meet his eyes at first, but at last she looked up, and tried to chat easily.

"Every one has gone to New York, have they not? Well, summer don't last forever. Mr. Seymour, I wonder if we shall have the pleasure of meeting you in town?"

"In which town?" interposed her aunt. "You know Mr. Crozier spoke of sailing for Paris, Kate."

Kate blushed scarlet, half with embarrassment, half with indignation.

"I meant New York," she said, with a cold brevity, and as her eyes met Carl's, they drooped until the fringes lay upon her cheeks.

It was not the easiest thing in the world to carry on an animated conversation with Mrs. Montgomery's keen eyes fixed upon them; but Kate struggled hard, and kept it from flagging altogether.

Carl could not fail to see the half-impatient contempt with which she met her aunt's diplomatic recurrences to Mr. Crozier, for every mention of his name made her more restless. Before he had watched her long, his bitterness changed to pity. He loved her, and

with her sweet face before him, lost his strength.

But how could he speak to her? Mrs. Montgomery held her place, and chatted volubly, with a keen brilliance that would have amused him at any other time, but which now seemed almost unbearable. At last Kate gave up her efforts, and rested in her chair, shading her face with her hand, and looking weary, leaving to her conversation-loving relative the task of entertaining their visitor.

Carl resigned himself to his fate in an apathy, contenting himself with an occasional glance at the fair, drooping head and slender hand, and wondering if he must bid her farewell without the last words he had meant to say.

But just in the middle of her aunt's most biting sarcasms, a servant came in and carried her off. A gentleman, a lawyer, the man believed, wished to see her particularly.

Kate did not move for a few seconds after her aunt left the room, but sat looking down at the fur trimming upon her dress, and twisting it nervously with her fingers.

"And so our summer is over at last, Kathleen," said Carl, in a low voice.

The pretty name touched her very soul, but she could only try to steady herself, and lift her tender eyes with a sweet regret in them.

"At last," she said; "but then there are other summers to come, you know."

He rose from his seat and went to her side, bending over her to imprison the restless fingers.

"Are you sure of that?" he asked, hoarsely. "For the last month I have sometimes thought there would be no more summers for me. I came to say good-by to you. Must it be good-by forever? Is it true, this story people tell me, that my innocent, child-love is a false, worldly woman? Is it true, Kathleen Mavourneen?"

She had smiled calmly into other men's eyes as she sent them to their ruin, but she could not smile at this man. Her beautiful face grew pale, and she slipped from his grasp, and stood up before him with a terrible effort at self-control.

"I do not understand," she faltered. "You have no right to speak to me so. I am—you must know I am engaged, Mr. Seymour—almost a wife, and—and I dare not listen



to you." But before she had finished, she dropped her face upon her clasped hands, resting against the mantel-piece, and shivered a little.

Carl gazed at her a moment, blankly. Until then he had never known how far he had trusted her, how little he had believed the stories of her worldliness. He drew his hand across his eyes to clear away the blind darkness which seemed to have come upon him, and then he found his voice, and spoke to her.

"Almost a wife?" he repeated. "What right have I to speak to you of this? What right have I? No right, I suppose. Only the right of a mad fool, who has loved and trusted you, because you were an innocent child once, and the lips I kissed were so pure. Are they pure now, with that man's kisses upon them? If I had not loved you so long, I might forgive you; if I had not loved you in those childish days, I might forget. Kate," he drew near to her, and his voice rung like a command, "lift your sweet face to me, and tell me this is a lie!"

Men who had called him cold-blooded would not have lived through this. His brain whirled,

he forgot everything but his bitter, bitter passion.

"Kate, lift your sweet face to me, and tell me this is a lie!" he repeated.

She looked up at him proudly, almost defiantly.

She had conquered herself at last; and it was Kate Davenant whose eyes met his, and her voice was as clear as a bell.

"Why do you ask me this?" she said, "what do you mean by lies? I am engaged to Mr. Crozier, and shall be his wife in three months from now. I am very sorry if you have mistaken—" but there the miserable lie she was telling died away before the man's fierce scorn.

"Stop!" he said. "I shall ask no more questions. I wish to hear nothing more. You 'are sorry I have mistaken you'? God help me! I would have rather died two months ago than have believed my love could end in such utter contempt as I feel now. You have shown me what a woman can do; you have taught me whether it is better to trust the face and voice of an angel, or the lips of a devil. The woman I have loved is dead, and only you

—*you* are left. I came to say farewell to you. Hear me say it, forever! forever! And hear me tell you, that I would not touch your hand, or your lips, if you prayed for it at my feet. The summer is ended indeed.”

Men are not merciful at any time, but now, in his wild despair, this man was worse than cruel. If he had raised his hand and struck her—struck her on her proud, white face—he would have been more kind.

Her large eyes opened wide, and purple shadows gathered round them; her lips parted and as he ended, she swayed a little toward him. But, with a look of ineffable scorn, he turned and left the room.

Then, and not till then, she slipped to the floor with her hands flung upward.

## CHAPTER X.

## A G A I N.

A SPACE of three years! A long leap, you think, but if I had not made it, where would my story have ended? And after these three years have passed, we find ourselves in Mrs. Armadale's parlor, listening to that pretty, fair-faced young matron, as she chats with her brother, counting over the names of the new acquaintances she had made at Saratoga, just before she came to reside at her brother's pretty villa on the Hudson, within an hour and a half of New York by rail. A very sweet little lady she is, Barbara Armadale. Fair-faced, blonde-haired and clear-eyed, and with three absorbing passions, which fill up her bright, happy, busy life, as a bright, happy, busy young wife and mother. The first of these passions is for "Alf," or more properly Mr. Armadale, who is as bright and cheerful as herself; the next is for the children, whom Mr. Armadale calls "the baby, the little baby, and the least baby of all;" and the last, but

not the least, is for her brother, whom she regards as the most perfect human being on earth—next to “Alf.” Such a pretty, cozy little woman as she looks sitting in the fire-light, with the shining hair pushed back from her little pink ears, and the freshness glowing in the rose on her cheeks.

“Mr. Germaine and his wife, Mr. Vandeleur and his wife,” she says, in a voice like a particularly sweet-tempered robin’s, “Mr. Crozier and his wife; and that reminds me, Carl ——”

“Mr. Who and his wife?” interrupted a voice from the dark corner where the sofa stood.

“Mr. Crozier and his wife,” answered Mrs. Armadale. “And, as I said, that reminds me, Carl, that I wanted to ask you if you knew Mr. Crozier. He said he met you several times when he was at Newport, the summer before your uncle died and left you your fortune.”

The man she spoke to was lying upon the sofa, stretched at full length, with his hands thrown upward and clasped above his head, and as his sister turned round to him the fire-light fell full upon his face. A very handsome

face it was, clear-cut and large-eyed, the mouth half hidden by a heavy, down-drooping, blonde mustache.

But, handsome as it was, a keen physiognomist would have hesitated to pronounce it perfect. It looked like a face which the world's influences had spoiled, or, rather, it looked as if its owner was a man to whom the wine of life had turned bitter.

"Yes, I met him several times. Something between a professional prize-fighter and a banker's clerk, wasn't he?"

Mrs. Armadale laughed.

"Well, he wasn't very aristocratic-looking, to be sure. A little 'mushroomy,' one might say; but he was immensely rich. Horridly rich, I thought. One of those people who cannot help showing how rich they are."

"I know him," said Carl. "They used to call him the Grand Mogul. Barbara," with a curious biting of his lips, which the firelight showed, "didn't you say something about Mrs. Crozier?"

"Yes. His wife was with him."

"What sort of a woman was she?"

"Pretty," said Barbara; "a trifle faded and

worn, but still pretty. I often thought it was no wonder she had faded with John Crozier, Esq., for a husband. He was so abominably dictatorial. I should want to bite a man who spoke to me in the authoritative style he used to her. But what made you ask about her?"

"I saw her at Newport," was the brief reply. "She was a belle, then, and there was quite a little *furor* created when she engaged herself to the Mogul; but it was the old story, you know—exchange and barter."

Little Mrs. Barbara shrugged her plump shoulders contemptuously.

"I'm not sorry for her, then. How *can* women? I think it's horrible."

"You are a different woman from Mrs. Crozier," said the gentleman, indifferently. "Let us talk of something else, Barbie."

Strange to say, the lady was not so much interested in the subject, but that she could easily leave it. Other people's business rarely interested Mrs. Armadale, and she passed on to something else. "The children" were the next topic. She knew Carl always liked to hear about them, and now she wanted his advice particularly.

"You see I don't know what to do," she said, with a little doubtful anxiety that was wonderfully motherly and pretty on her almost girlish face. "I can't be with them always, and I don't like to trust them to the servants altogether. Old aunt Dorcas is very good, but the children are so apt to adopt her funny negro *patois*; and besides, if Clara and Johnny don't begin French now, they never *will* acquire the accent."

"Terrible!" said her brother, with amused laziness. "What a fearful state of affairs in the nursery dominion. Barbara, you are like a domesticated robin, always in a flutter about the nest."

"There is a great deal of anxiety about a family," with a demure sententiousness, which was the most delightful little farce in the world. "You have never been married Carl!"

"No," said Carl, meditatively. "I should have been a better man if I had. If there had been a woman true and loving enough to be my wife and share my lot, I should have been nearer heaven than I am now;" and the fire-light showed the handsome, bitten lip again;



and Barbara wondered somewhat at the bitter sigh that ended the sentence.

"Well," she said, softly, "I don't see why you didn't get married, dear. You are not poor, and I am sure any woman might love you."

"I am not poor now," was the quiet reply. "I was not rich when nothing but money would have won the woman I loved. But what about the children?"

Barbara's blue eyes opened softly. Was it possible that her famous, handsome brother had been disappointed? She had never suspected it before. How had it happened? How could it have happened?

But she was a wise, good little woman, and understood this handsome brother well enough to know that he would think it kinder if she let the accidental remark slip by without any comment.

"Well," she went on, "I thought if we had a governess. Don't you think it would be nice if I could find some elegant, accomplished woman? I should feel so much more comfortable."

"If you could, I think it would be a good plan. Have you spoken to Alf about it?"

"Yes; but I wanted to ask your opinion. If I had been in my own house it would have been different," laughing frankly; "but I did not know whether you would like the idea of a 'correct' lady to criticise you."

"I don't think she will criticise me," said Carl. "The cherubs will occupy all her attention. What are you listening at so intently? Is it Alf at last?"

"I thought I heard somebody coming," coloring a little and laughing. "Yes, it is Alf at last. I hear him speaking to Roberts now. Excuse me a minute."

Carl smiled as she jumped up with the bright, pleased look on her face, and went out to meet her husband, who was returning from his daily trip to New York. This sweet-tempered little sister of his always amused him. She was so affectionate and merry, so loving and womanly over the children, so prettily solicitous about this same good-natured Alf's comfort. Always so tender and impulsive, even now, after eight years of married life, when the honey-moon in some cases would have been only a bright spot lying far in the darkness, bringing tears into the aching eyes that dared

to look backward. But Barbara Armadale was just the little woman whose honey-moon would never pass, because it had been a honey-moon whose brightness had been the brightness of her own sunny sweetness and affectionate temperament. To this day "Alf" was the Alf of the bridal tour; not quite as sentimental, of course, (perhaps happily,) but still quite as careful of Mrs. Armadale, and quite as implicitly believed in by Mrs. Armadale, as when, for four successive weeks, they had regarded earthly food as something entirely unworthy of consideration, and had caught terrible and very unromantic colds by persistently gazing at the moon and quoting Byron and Moore. In Mrs. Armadale's mind there was but one thing on earth to equal Alf, and that one thing was the baby, and the only things which could come up to them both, were the other two children.

Carl—this bitter Carl Seymour—you know him by this time, I am sure, who was hard and sarcastic, careless, and often selfish in these sad, embittered days, cared for this loving young wife and mother as he cared for no one else. She made him better and purer, and

exerted an influence upon him such as even he himself never dreamed of. Sometimes at night, as he had passed the open nursery-door, he had looked in upon her as she sat in the low rocking-chair with baby on her breast, and grave, blue-eyed Johnny kneeling before her in his white night-gown, saying after her slowly the old, never-dying, never-fading, "Our Father." And then, after he had watched them for a moment, he had turned away, feeling a little nearer heaven for the sound of the childish prayer.

The world said of him, and said truly, that he was a selfish, brilliant, cynical man, who had won fame, who was rich, and who cared little for people in general. Men with fresh hearts avoided, while they admired him; women who were true-hearted pitied him for his lost life and bitterness. Lavish he was and generous to profuseness, seeming to value his wealth lightly, yet always cold and cynical, sneering at the best impulses of men and women, flinging out stinging sarcasms mingled with his graceful wit. Not a bad man—never that—always an honorable gentleman, but nevertheless a man who could hardly look

forward and dare not look back. Barbara had only known him as her brother and her friend, talented, graceful, popular, and to her always kindly and tender. She had thought him a little satirical sometimes, but that was all.

"It is only Carl's way," she had said, and gone on worshipping him.

A good woman might have made him a good man. A woman who was neither good nor true, had, as we know, reader, made him what he was.

He lay back on the couch when Barbara left him, and closed his eyes. He could hear her fresh voice in the hall as she greeted her husband; and then came the little pause that was suggestive of the kiss the gentleman always received after a day's absence. Then the two went up stairs together, and a chorus from Johnny and Clara broke out as they passed the nursery-door.

If such a kiss might have greeted him; if such a bright face had met him each night; if such childish voices had shouted his name. The thought passed through his mind, leaving a dull pain.

He did not love Kate Davenant now. Some-

times he thought he hated her, but still, under all his contempt, lay the old scar, throbbing, throbbing. Three years, and she was faded and worn, and this man, who was her master and owner, was proving that he knew his power. Could it be? A faint disgust thrilled him.

As he lay there, with closed eyes, the four summer months passed before him again. The first evening, when Alice Farnham had pointed out the "Circe," as she smiled on the celebrities with the glow in her purple eyes. Then the times when he had met her again and again, always the belle, always with the wonderful grace that drew the world after her. Then the days when he had looked up from his work at the star-faced Clytie, and unconsciously gained inspiration. He could see again the vaporous folds of muslin that trailed on the balcony, the intense light on the bright glinting hair, and the intense soft scarlet on cheek and lip. He could almost hear the whisper of the sea again as the exquisite voice floated back to him. He had not forgotten—ah! could he ever forget it! La Valliere kneeling in the dim, mellow light, with the

white uplifted face and passionate eyes, while the convent-bell broke upon her praying, with its dooming knell. And then the moon was shining on little Kathleen's scarlet cloak, as she sung her song with the softness of tears veiling her voice. Ah! the eyes he had met that night, the true, tender eyes, true and tender for that moment, as they dropped before his gaze. Could it all—all have ended in this heartless life of his, in which he was told that the woman he had loved and trusted, the woman who had blighted his very soul, had won the prize for which she had lost all, and now, in wearing it was faded and worn? All his hatred and contempt died away in an aching longing for the trust he had once felt in his innocent child-love. He had not forgiven her, he thought he never could; but, ah! if the dead past could have come back again.

At least an hour he lay pondering, until the flame died out of the fire and left nothing but the red embers shedding a rich, gloomy light about the room. But at last the nursery door opened, and Mrs. Armadale and her husband came down again, talking and laughing.

"Gone to sleep, Carl?" Barbara asked gayly. "No? How dark you are. I am going to ring for lights and tea." And she pulled the bell.

When tea was brought in, she seated herself at the head of the table in the sunshiniest of moods. She cut the cold tongue for Alf, and made the thinnest of sandwiches for him, calling him lazy all the time, but still looking as if she enjoyed it. Carl liked one lump of sugar, didn't he, and Alf three? Baby had cut his first little tooth—the darling! and Clara could say her prayers without being told, and Johnny had called his papa "Alf, dear," because he heard mamma say it. To all of which chatter the two gentlemen listened with laughing attention. The little lady did not detail nursery gossip to every one, but she knew that Carl and Alf liked it.

"And the best of all is yet to be told," she went on. "Alf has really found a governess, Carl."

"What sort of a governess? Fossil specimen, or otherwise?"

"Most decidedly 'otherwise,'" said Alf. "I am not going to describe her, because description would be superfluous; and, besides, there



is a curious coincidence, which I wish to surprise you with, as it did me."

"But she speaks French?" suggested Barbara.

"And German and Italian," answered Alf. "I won't answer for Japanese and High Dutch, and I ain't quite certain about Gaelic and Hindostanee; but I am quite safe about the rest."

"Pianist?" queried Mrs. Armadale again.

"Pianist, organist, violinist, banjoist, plays on the bagpipes, dances on a tight rope, does up *trapeze* performances, sings comic songs."

"Now, Alf," from Mrs. Armadale, "do be quiet and answer one more question. What church——"

"Ah!" interrupted her husband, gravely, "as to that I believe she is a Protestant; but, being a very accommodating young lady, I dare say she would have no objection to changing her religion. Mohammedan for Johnny, Mormonism for Clara, and Hardshell Baptist for the cherubim. Anything else, my dear?"

Mrs. Armadale shook her head.

"No. I am quite satisfied; but what is her name?"

Alf stopped half way to his mouth with a sandwich.

"The mischief! I forgot to ask her, or else it has slipped my memory. Wait a minute, now I remember. It is something beginning with David—— Never mind quizzing, Barbie. You will see her to-morrow."

It was some time before Mr. Armadale could be brought to a due sense of the solemnity of the question discussed; but at last Mrs. Armadale managed him and learned the particulars.

A young lady had replied to his advertisement in person. An aristocratic-looking girl, with a magnificent, proud face, and bright brown hair.

"Such a voice!" said the gentleman. "It was like the echo of a song; and such a perfect accent of both French and German. She says she has spent several years in Europe. She must have a history. It is an easy matter to see that she was never educated for a governess. There is so much superb ease about her manner."

"How fortunate!" said delighted Barbara. "I want the children to learn the languages by ear, and you know we can't afford to go

to Europe for a year or so. I am so glad, Alfred."

"I knew you would be," he answered. "But let us have some music, my dear. I am going to smoke, and want my evening sonata."

It was eleven o'clock before the music was over; and then Carl went to his studio, for he still painted, and holding up a taper, looked at two pictures that hung side by side, the two pictures painted three years before at Newport. Brown-haired, purple-eyed, and rare-faced, with the exquisite sweetness and flawless charm. And this woman was "faded and worn!"

The light flashed over the fair, still features, and then they were shadowed in darkness; and he turned away and left them to go to his room and dream of a strange woman, who was the new governess, and yet wore Kate Davenant's face, and spoke with Kate Davenant's voice.

## CHAPTER XI.

## FACE TO FACE.

ALL the next day he was in his studio, busy, adding the finishing touches to a picture; and as at such times he never left his work, he heard nothing more of his sister's arrangements. But when at night, after laying everything aside, he was coming down to the parlor, he met Mrs. Armadale descending from the nursery, with the little, pink-faced bundle of white lawn and lace in her arms, which always suggested baby, and she stopped him on the landing with a delighted face.

"Are you coming into the parlor, now? I hope so. She has come, Carl, and I like her ever so much. I know we shall be good friends."

Carl smiled. He knew it would be the stranger's fault if they were not. The idea of Barbara's not being good friends with anybody was rather a joke. She had such a habit of purring, and cooing, and petting, that not the most stony of stony hearts could have re-

sisted her. Carl followed her down stairs, and on their way she dilated eloquently on her new acquaintance. The new governess was so elegant, and so beautiful, and, "oh, Carl, so sweet!"

Mrs. Armadale was sure she should love her like a sister. The new governess had won the children's hearts at first, and Mrs. Armadale was just bringing baby down to be exhibited.

"You see," went on the kind-hearted little matron, "I want to make her feel at home, Carl. She seems so lonely. She has neither mother, nor father, nor relations of any kind. The aunt who educated her has been dead only a few months, and unfortunately died without a will, leaving her penniless. Of course, one can't ask questions, but I am sure she is a gentlewoman born."

"What is her name?" asked Carl. "Have you found out yet, or did you engage her on the strength of her aristocracy?"

"No," laughed Mrs. Armadale, settling baby's flowing robes preparatory to entering the parlor. "I am wiser than Alf. Her name is as aristocratic as her face. Davenant—

Kate Davenant. Ain't it pretty? Open the door, please." And as Carl bent over her, and turned the handle, a sweet, low ripple of laughter came upon them, and they stepped into the room.

Some one sat beside the fire, in an easy-chair, talking to Mr. Armadale, who was listening, with entranced pleasure showing itself on every feature. The back of the chair was turned toward the door, but Carl could see the folds of a black dress lying upon the carpet, and a close-fitted sleeve setting off a smooth, round wrist and slender hand, which rested upon the chair-arm.

At the sound of the door opening the lady looked up, and Barbara came forward into the light of the fire with baby.

"My brother, Mr. Seymour, Miss Davenant," she said, smiling. "And here is baby——"

Miss Davenant rose in the firelight, the crimson glow falling full upon her, upon the trailing folds of the black dress sweeping upon the carpet with the old royal sweep of the Circe's robes, upon the crown of glinting brown hair, with its metallic sheen, upon the "Valliere" face, and the winy purple of the eyes that

met Carl Seymour's. Just a glance from either face, and these two, who had loved each other once, whose lives had once seemed linked together, met with a calm bow as strangers, not touching hands, hardly smiling, unless the half sneer on the man's face could be called a smile.

"And this is baby?" said Miss Davenant, turning to the lawn and lace in Mrs. Armadale's arms. "Is baby one of my pupils?"

It was quite a serene face that smiled the old, sweet smile over Barbara's treasure—a face much more serene than Carl Seymour's. He had turned away with a bitter smile by no means pleasant to see. And so Mrs. Crozier was not Miss Davenant, and this girl had crossed his path again?

To think that such a woman should live in innocent Barbara's home, and have the care of innocent Barbara's children! As he watched her bend over and kiss the baby lips, he felt a thrill of anger. There was all the old grace, in her every movement, all the old fascination in the perfect face, but their charm was lost to Carl. If he had known all, he might not have

been so harsh. Knowing only what he did—that she had proved false and mercenary, and had been his ruin—there was nothing, nothing of forgiveness or relenting in his mind.

Innocent Barbara was in a seventh heaven of good-natured delight. This beautiful girl so ardently appreciated baby. When at last Miss Davenant acceded to Alf's request and went to the piano, the little lady drew her chair to her brother's side.

"Did you ever see such a curious coincidence, Carl? That 'La Valliere' and the 'Kathleen Mavourneen' are the very reproductions of her face. Is it possible you have ever met her before?"

"It is a coincidence I cannot account for," said the gentleman, briefly. "I can hardly believe it, but this Miss Davenant of yours is the young lady who was pointed out to me at Newport as Mr. Crozier's future wife, and until I saw her to-night, I imagined she was the Mrs. Crozier you met at Saratoga."

"You don't say so? Oh, no! My Mrs. Crozier was a little, brown-haired woman, with a harassed face and a scared expression. As unlike Miss Davenant as it is possible for



two women to be. The engagement must have been broken. What a voice she has! Do listen to her!"

She was singing a little song she had sung for Carl a hundred times before. A little Spanish love-song, with an accompaniment like running water, and a faint throb of pain threading through it. Carl did not like to hear it now. He would gladly have closed his ears to it, and yet he must sit and listen to the end, and hear Barbara's ecstatic chorus of "Beautiful!"

But at length baby fell asleep, and Barbara carried him to the nursery, and a few minutes after sent for Alf to come up stairs. Alf made his excuses and went. It was possible that Johnny had a cough, or Clara's face was flushed, and under such circumstances a grave consultation must be held.

After he had left them, Kate rose from her seat at the piano and came to the fire. It was not a pleasant situation to be in, but she carried herself gracefully and calmly as usual. Carl looked at her from head to foot. Faded and worn! Twenty years would hardly change her! Every tint on her delicate skin was as

rarely vivid and firm as the rose and pearl of a sea-shell. Just as much the Circe now, when she was only Mrs. Armadale's governess, as when she had been in Mrs. Montgomery's charge, and the belle of Newport.

"I had no idea—" she began, and then faltered a little under his cold eyes, and stopped.

"Nor had I," was the very icy reply. "I wonder if either of us is very agreeably surprised!"

The color ran up on her face, but the eyes turned toward him showed nothing but calm, well-bred surprise at his sarcastic bitterness. His love had been worse than indifference, for it had robbed her of his respect. He was almost savage in his cynicism, and he had so far lost his reverence for her that he forgot himself, and felt as though there would be some merited revenge in baffling her proud stateliness with scorn. But this was not an easy matter.

"I am afraid not," she said, in answer to his sarcasm. "But I do not see how we—how I, at least, can help it. If I had known, I certainly should not have come here. As it is, unless you tell Mrs. Armadale to send me

away, I suppose I shall have to bear my share of the unpleasantness."

It was very quietly said, almost meekly, indeed, but the words and tone stung him to the quick. It was a hard task to abuse a woman who was at his mercy, and yet showed that she felt no fear, even while she knew her helplessness.

"Tell Mrs. Armadale to send you away!" he sneered. "Do you think I am a brute? My experience has not made me a very good man, or a very chivalrous one. You see I have outlived my tender belief in 'ministering angels,' etc.; and I am not very polite to women whom I neither love nor respect. I told you I would never forgive you—and I never will. You have made me what I am, but as for the rest——"

He stopped and shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

Kate Davenant took one step nearer, and looked at him fearlessly. She had got over the days when his harsh words had made her faint at his feet, and his almost insulting, and quite unmanly tone roused her. It was a horribly bitter thing to hear him speak of "women

whom he neither loved nor respected," but her indignation helped her to bear it.

"I am very poor, Mr. Seymour," she said, clearly and steadily. "I have not one friend or protector in the world. I am a menial in your house, and I suppose I am at your mercy; but I have not asked you to forgive me yet. When I ask you, it will be time to refuse pardon; not till then."

Her white throat was arched, and her eyes opened wide with a great spark of starry fire in them, as she looked down upon him. There was not a touch of weakness or regretful yielding in her whole being, he could see that. It was a matter of open conflict between powers equal, though one was even a woman. Greek had met Greek at last, and now came the tug of war. A little fiery thrill shot through the man's veins. It was remembrance, it was resentment, it was admiration. She was so beautiful! so beautiful! so proudly perfect! and then—it might have been. Still he answered her as defiantly as she had spoken.

"Thank you!" he said. "You are very kind. And as you are so mercifully disposed, suppose we let matters rest here. I myself see no

reason for heroics, in spite of my little impoliteness. I forgot myself. Pray, excuse me."

Kate bowed. Just such a bow, haughty and tolerant, as had won her a reputation in by-gone days. Then she seated herself, and taking up Barbara's neglected tatting, began to work industriously. Mr. Seymour had not shaken her self-possession in the least. There was no trace of either anger or agitation in her face, and when Mrs. Armadale returned, Kate was still employing herself with the flying shuttle, with an appearance of ease and pleasure, which delighted the young matron immensely.

The next day the children were taken in hand. Johnny, the youngest pupil, was a blue-eyed urchin, with a wonderful good-nature and gravity that made him, in a small way, quite a character. After a few minutes' calm inspection, with his hands clasped behind his back, he made an unconditional surrender to Miss Davenant's witchery, and said his lessons, gazing fixedly and wonderingly at her beautiful face. One glance won graceful, quiet little Clara. She was a second Barbara, with all her mother's innate refinement and pas-

sionate admiration of beauty. From the date of the first kiss Miss Davenant reigned supreme.

Mrs. Armadale, as I have said before, was not curious, but it must be admitted the new governess interested her deeply. But Carl was strangely reticent on the subject. He only spoke of her as an acquaintance by reputation, and never hinted that he had ever spoken to her before. Besides, he did not seem at all anxious to pursue the subject; indeed, once or twice she fancied that he avoided it.

## CHAPTER XII.

## KISMET.

IT was not often that Mrs. Armadale looked troubled, but troubled she certainly looked, when she came into the school-room to Kate, one morning, a month or so after the arrival of the governess. Mr. Armadale had returned from New York only the night before, in a great hurry.

"I don't know what to do, Kate," she said, after the children had been sent down stairs. "Mr. Armadale says it is absolutely imperative that I should go to New Orleans with him. There has been some trouble about the property there, which Clara's godmother left her, and my presence is necessary. It seems I must sign something. How can I leave the children? Baby is not well, and both Johnny and Clara are ailing. I shall be perfectly miserable, though, of course, I won't say so to Alf. Besides, it will be so unpleasant for you.

Kate had not meant to be selfish, but, honestly, the first idea which had suggested itself

to her was the unpleasant position she would necessarily be thrown into. But Barbara's evident anxiety roused her sympathies.

"You have no need to be anxious," she said, cheerfully. "Aunt Dorcas is reliable, I think; and though I am not a very good nurse, I will try to take care of the children."

"I am sure you will do that," answered Barbara, her face clearing slightly. "But I am afraid it will be so much trouble; and then Clara is so delicate that I am always anxious if there is a tinge too much or too little on her cheeks. I wish—I do wish the journey was not so positively necessary."

It required all Kate's powers of consolation to reassure her; but at last she became somewhat less fearful.

"But if any of them should be taken sick," she said, as she left the room to go and superintend her packing, "be sure to write to me at once, if you please."

Kate promised faithfully, and the young matron took her departure in a somewhat easier frame of mind. As for the Circe, to say that she was perplexed, would be to give but a faint idea of her feelings. The children she could



have managed easily; nay, she said to herself, if there had been three dozen instead of three, she would gladly have undertaken their charge, if by doing so she could have avoided this embarrassing *tête-à-tête* position. But it seemed there was no avoiding it, and so she could only accept it with as good a grace as possible.

Since the first evening, she had hardly once seen her antagonist alone. When they had met they had barely exchanged civilities. How would *tête-à-tête* dinners and breakfasts pass off, for, necessarily, Miss Davenant must take the place Mrs. Armadale had vacated? In spite of her discomfort, she could not help smiling as she thought of it. Well, there was only one part which could be acted, and that involved perfect, well-bred calmness. Since she must meet him, and play the part of mistress of the household, it should be done gracefully, and without her manner indicating that anything had occurred to make the position other than a pleasant one. Nevertheless, she felt it would need all her self-possession and self-knowledge to carry her through.

The day was a busy one, and rather unsettled by the preparations for the journey; but at last

the bustle was over, and the carriage containing Mrs. Armadale was driven away, with that anxious young matron's face showing itself at the window in a rather dubiously cheerful farewell to the children.

When it was out of sight, Kate took Johnny and Clara by the hand, and led them into the parlor.

It had been one of those chilly, gray days, with which the early part of autumn is occasionally interspersed, and a fire had been in the room all day, and by this fire Mr. Seymour was seated as they entered. He had not expected their coming, it was very plain; but Kate led her young charges to the hearth with the calmest of faces.

"The children will take tea with us to-night, if you have no objection, Mr. Seymour," she said, serenely, as she rested her arched foot on the fender to warm. "I thought they might possibly feel lonely."

Perhaps he was a little more mercifully inclined than usual; at all events, he took her cue as calmly as it was given. His quiet reply was quite a relief to Kate, for, to tell the truth, her courage had oozed out at her finger-ends,

when she first observed his presence. So far so good. At least the enemy had acknowledged the flag of truce. She took a seat opposite to him, and began to talk easily as she worked upon Mrs. Armadale's tatting. Mrs. Armadale had said she would probably be absent two weeks: did he think it probable her stay would be prolonged? Mr. Seymour thought it just possible. Ah! that was a pity—she had been so anxious about the children. Barbara always was anxious about the children, was the gentleman's reply; and by this time his book lay upon his knee, half-closed upon his shapely hand, and he was watching Miss Davenant's slim, pointed fingers, as they flew back and forth with the little pearl shuttle.

She knew he was looking at her, and the knowledge was not pleasant. Nevertheless, she did not care to look up, and so went on quietly.

"You were reading when we came in," with a faint smile. "Don't let us disturb you. The children will be quiet."

"Thank you!" he said, as serenely, yet with a keen scrutiny in his haughty, handsome eyes.

"There is no fear of disturbance. Listen to what I was reading :

I think, in the lives of most women and men,  
There are times when all might be smooth and even,  
If the dead could only find out when  
To come back to us and be forgiven.'

"I was wondering," he went on, "if this verse might not mean more than dead friends. Might we not apply it to dead loves, dead hopes, dead happiness?"

If Miss Davenant had been an unsophisticated young lady, she would probably have blushed and shown uneasiness under this seemingly harmless remark, which, with the old story in the past, might be so pointed ; but, as she was not an unsophisticated young lady, she did not blush, but merely drew out the tiny shuttle a little faster, with a soft, calm laugh. "Possibly," she said. "But as I have neither dead hopes nor dead loves, I cannot say, you see. But what a beautiful verse it is. Won't you please read me the rest?"

Checkmate! She had secured her draw-bridge ; but, even years after, she did not for-

get the spark of slow fire in his eyes, as they fell upon the book again.

For the first time, in the evening, the red shot warmly to her very forehead, and she bent over her work to hide it.

He read on for an hour, passing from one poem to another, hardly looking up from the book, and seeming all the time to be acting from a sense of cold politeness. Before the tea-tray was brought in, Kate was not quite sure but that his face wore a slightly bored expression, and she made an indignant resolve to confine herself to the school-room and nursery as much as possible.

There was a faint crimson spot on either cheek when at last she took her place at the head of the table, with Johnny and Clara on either side, and her enemy as *vis-a-vis*. She looked very graceful in her position, Carl thought, and very sweet, with her soft-voiced commands to the children, but she did not look at him more than she could help; and once, when handing him his cup, her hand touched his, she flushed like a girl, and drew it away quickly. For her part she was wondering if the meal would ever be over, and asking

herself if it would be too glaring, hereafter, to leave him with his housekeeper, and stop with the children in the nursery. Two weeks of this would be impossible! But it was over at length, and she rose from the table and touched the bell.

"We will go up to the nursery now," she said to the children. "You know we have to finish that story, Johnny." And with her two charges running before her, in a great hurry for the story, she went out of the room and closed the door behind her.

Once up stairs, she found her hands full. Baby was there, with Aunt Dorcas, fretting a little as he lay on her lap. Johnny and Clara seated themselves on their respective stools, anxious for the promised story; but Kate had been long enough in the Armadale household to feel a trifle anxious at baby's flushed face, and faint little grunts of disapproval.

"What is the matter with him?" she asked of Aunt Dorcas. "I hope he isn't sick, aunty?"

The old woman shook her head.

"I'm afeard he ain't well, honey," she said. "He's bin sorter gruntin' all day. Mebbe he's only missin' his mar."

Kate held out her hands.

"Let me have him," she said with a faint sense of discomfort. "I hope he won't be sick while Mrs. Armadale is away."

She felt uneasy, and she could hardly hide it. What if anything should happen! She held baby closer in her arms, and bent and kissed its little face. She looked wonderfully like Barbara about her tender mouth and anxious eyes as she did it. She had always loved the children, even in her bitterest moments, and it seemed so natural for her heart to warm with the soft cheeks nestling against it. The children had their story, and after it came to its natural ending, where the youngest brother did all the impossible things, and married the obliging princess with the convenient father and three kingdoms, she sent them to bed.

Aunt Dorcas went with them. Kate was left to herself, seated on Barbara's rocking-chair, with Barbara's baby on her lap. She hardly knew what she was thinking of, as she rocked to and fro, and sung one of Barbara's pretty songs in her low, clear voice—the voice that had brought showers of flowers to her feet in by-gone days. But at any rate, she was

thinking deeply, for her eyes were fixed dreamily on the fire, and she did not hear the quick footstep coming up the stairs. There was a footstep, and just by the open door it stopped a moment, and Carl Seymour drew his breath sharply as he looked in. What was there of good or evil, in this girl, that she could sting him with her cool indifference and bitter pride, and then come among these innocent children and teach them to love her as if she were as innocent as themselves? And hold this white-souled baby in her arms and sing tender songs to it with that tender smile on her lips? And then a wild thought leaped up. What if the past had been only a dream! What if God and heaven (for it seemed as if God and heaven were near to the tender vision) had but given him the right to call this girl wife, and to enter the little room and kiss her sweet face, and hold her white hands and draw her head upon his shoulder, feeling at rest, and better and stronger for her lovingness! Ah! how his heart beat as he remembered how far apart they were, and how they were to live their lives away from each other and unforgiven. But when she came to the end of her little song he turned away.



It seemed as if there was a spell upon them that night, or that Fate had ordered that the sea of memory should be stirred, for once again their acted part was broken in upon.

Baby had fallen asleep, and after laying him in the cradle, Kate had left him to Aunt Dorcas, and gone down stairs to give some directions to the servants.

Having done what she wished, she intended retiring for the night; but on reaching the head of the stairs, she found that the servants had neglected to lower the lights of a large swinging lamp which had its place there. It must be attended to, and balancing herself upon one foot, she reached over the balustrade to touch it.

She heard some one close the parlor-door as she did so, and glancing down caught sight of Carl coming up toward her. Perhaps it was her confusion, perhaps the light dazzled her, but at least she could not see well, and her hand was unsteady. He was only a few steps below her, and in an impatient impulse she bent further over, lost her balance, and then her foot slipped, and but that he had caught her in his arms she would have fallen down

the whole flight. As it was, his arm closed strongly round her waist, and for a moment she rested upon his breast, crimson with mortification. The next instant he had released her, and she stood upon the step feeling almost indignant, and, in spite of herself, trembling from head to foot, and showing her confusion terribly. He was the calmer of the two, but his face was perfectly colorless, and his voice sounded almost unnatural when he spoke to her.

"I hope you are not hurt!" he said. "It was fortunate I happened to come when I did."

She could hardly answer him. It seemed so horrible to her. Her cheek had touched his as she fell. And this man had loved her once, and now hated her!

"No," she said, "I am not hurt. Thank you!" and before he had time to speak she had turned and gone swiftly up the stairs again, hardly knowing what she did.

Her cheeks were hot, scarlet, when she locked her door, and went to the mirror to look at herself, and her mouth was trembling like a child's. She almost clenched her hand in her

passion of humiliation. She could not control herself, and after the first glance she dropped her face upon her hands.

“Oh! I am a coward!” she said, passionately. “Oh! what a pitiful coward I am! What is this I am learning? What have I done?”

## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE ONYX CROSS.

KATE dressed herself very slowly the next morning, and stood a long time at the mirror, before she could decide to go down to the breakfast-room at all. Not that she was anxious about her toilet, but that she wished to put off the evil hour as long as possible, if not forever. The bell had rung for the second time. Even then a sudden recollection caused her to turn back to the dressing-table. There had been a slender chain round her neck the night before, suspending a little Gothic cross of onyx and gold, and it had suddenly struck her that she had not seen it since she dressed. She could not recollect having taken it off, and it certainly was not on the toilet-stand. Perhaps it had dropped upon the floor. She bent down and looked for it, but to no avail—it was not to be found. Her grandmother had given her the cross the day she left with Mrs. Montgomery, and had told her that it was her father's gift to her deserted mother. She had

worn it often in the Newport days, and once she had told Carl Seymour its story, and he had asked her if the mother's true heart had descended to the daughter.

It might possibly have slipped from its clasp as she fell, and he might have picked it up. That was the only way in which she could account for its absence, and she by no means liked the idea of recalling the scene to his mind by questioning him. Surely, if he had seen it, he would restore it without being asked.

Giving up the search as useless, she went down to the nursery for Clara and Johnny, who were waiting for her to take them to the breakfast-room.

Aunt Dorcas, who was crooning over baby, looked up somewhat anxiously as she entered. Baby was lying quite still, his tiny face flushed with the hot-red, which Kate knew was Mrs. Armadale's special horror, and she felt a nervous thrill as she noted the dark rings round his eyes, and the heavy sleep he seemed to have fallen into.

"Is he worse?" she asked, quickly. "How did he sleep, Aunt Dorcas?"

"Mighty badly, Miss Kate, honey. "He's jest dropped off for the first time since twelve last night, and mebbe it will help him. Sleep does a power o' good to chil'en."

Mrs. Armadale surely never looked more anxious than her governess did, as she stooped over the little one, and touched its hot cheek with her white fore-finger. It was just pretty Barbara's way, and there was just pretty Barbara's thoughtfulness in her softened eyes.

"Well," she said, when she raised her head, "I must go down to breakfast now, but if baby is no better soon, I shall send for the doctor."

She marshaled the children before her into the parlor, talking to them gayly; but for all that she found it no easy matter to say her good-morning. Her face colored high, in spite of herself, and her hand positively shook as she poured out the first cup of coffee. For a while Carl and she had exchanged places, for though he was a shade paler than usual, he was quite collected.

"We may expect a letter from Barbara to-day, I suppose," he said, with a slight smile. "When she is away I am always compelled to issue bulletins from the nursery, on pain of

seeing her worn to a skeleton by the time Alf brings her home."

Kate was not quite sure but that she felt grateful to him for his nonchalance. But then he could afford to be nonchalant. It was not he who had fallen into her arms, and her cheeks grew a thought hotter than before.

"I am afraid the bulletin for to-day is not very satisfactory," she said, trifling with her spoon. "Baby is not well this morning." And before she had finished her sentence, she found herself coloring again, for he was smiling. With his recollection of the Circe of Newport, with her train of celebrities, and her butterfly-life, it seemed so odd to see her sitting there, in her quiet dress, and with her mermaid's hair knotted in the plain school-room fashion. A novel position for the Circe, surely, this of nurse, and consoler, and deputy mamma.

He was sorry to hear it, he said to her. She must not allow herself to be frightened; but if she thought it necessary, he would send for the family physician.

"Thank you. I will wait until evening," she answered. "If I still feel doubtful then, I will let you know."

She was glad when the meal was over and she found herself rising from the table.

But before she left the room, a servant came in to remove the breakfast things, and Kate thought there could hardly be a better time for speaking of her lost ornament, and so mentioned it.

"I had it last night," she added, addressing the servant; "I might have dropped it upon the stairs."

But the girl had not seen it, and Mr. Seymour said nothing, only when first she spoke, Kate observed that he raised his eyes from the paper he was reading. However, she gained no information, and so must fain go up stairs, and leave the cross to its fate.

What a dull day that was! The sky was dull, the house was dull, the children were dull, and Kate herself was in a perfect fit of blues. The lessons did not make any progress at all. Johnny's head ached, he said, and poor little Clara looked pale. Before the morning had half passed Kate closed the books.

"We won't try any more to-day, children," she said. "We must cure that headache,



Johnny, and, perhaps, we had better go and look at baby."

It was not often that Johnny complained, for he was a wonderfully patient child, but to-day his habitual sage stolidity seemed to have given way, and when he reached the nursery he began to cry.

Twelve months ago, Kate would have consigned him to the care of his attendant, and gone down stairs to the parlor, with a ladylike sense of annoyance; but now Barbara's responsibility seemed to have descended upon her shoulders, and she exerted herself to her utmost in the matter of consoling. She took Johnny upon her knee and told him one of the always available stories, she sung a little song for him, she built a block house on the hearth, and gravely related the history of its supposed occupants. But though the tears stopped, Johnny was not himself. He could not be moved to laughter, even at the adventures of Jack the Giant-Killer. He only sat still and listened, resting his head upon his hand, and now and then closing his eyes heavily. As she watched him Kate began to feel nervous, and at last she was positively frightened, for, as she ended her

stories, he fell into a deep, unnatural sleep upon her arm. She laid her hand against his cheek, and found it burning hot, and there was the same scarlet color on the skin which had alarmed her in baby.

"Aunt Dorcas," she said quietly, "I will go down stairs and speak to Mr. Seymour about sending for the doctor. I am afraid these children are going to be ill."

There was a little decisive click in the manner of shutting the door behind her as she left the room. She was thinking how much oftener Fate was going to compel her to put herself in Carl Seymour's way.

"From beggar to heiress, and from heiress to beggar!" she said, a thought bitterly. "And now I am mistress of a household, and sick-nurse in prospective. What next?"

And then she tapped at the studio-door, and a voice answered her summons with "Come in."

Since morning Carl had been shut up in his room, working fiercely. The door opened, and he felt no little surprise at the sight of the slender, black-robed figure of the serene-eyed young lady, who stood quietly on the threshold,

one slim, soft-looking hand resting upon the handle.

"I beg pardon for disturbing you," she said, gravely; "but I thought I ought to come and tell you that Johnny is not well, and baby is no better, and I should like to see the doctor."

At any rate, she did not commit herself in saying this lesson, for the purple-irised eyes met his gaze without a quiver of their fringes. He rose from his chair at once.

"I will see Dr. Chaloner myself," he said. "I am sorry to hear this! My sister will be so anxious. Is there anything I can do for you, while I am out, Miss Davenant?"

"Nothing," she said, with a cold bow of thanks, and after a few more civil words, she left him as quietly as she had come.

"What a pleasant position!" she said, stopping in the hall a moment. "If it were not for the children I should leave the house to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XIV.

W E.

JOHNNY was still sleeping when Kate re-entered the nursery, and as baby was fretting, she took the latter from Aunt Dorcas and tried to pacify it.

She was still engaged in the somewhat trying occupation when Carl came in with the doctor, a jolly, good-humored, fatherly old gentleman, who was one of Barbara's special weaknesses.

Kate was conscious of an effort to look as if she was used to her position, but it was somewhat of a failure, despite her demurely up-raised, questioning eyes, as he took the little one's hand in his.

"I hope it is nothing serious?" she asked, for his face had clouded, he being a doctor with an unprofessionally warm heart, and interested withal in sunny little Mrs. Armadale's olive-branches.

"Well," he said, slowly, "I hope not. There

is another invalid, you say? I should like to see him."

His voice was so gravely doubtful that Kate felt startled, and by the time he turned to her again, after looking at Johnny, she was absolutely pale.

"Mrs. Armadale is away from home, Mr. Seymour tells me. How long will she be absent?"

"Two weeks," said Kate. "But we are expecting a letter from her this evening."

There was not much to be gleaned from the gentleman's grave "Ah!" and not much to be read in his face, as he wrote out his prescriptions and handed them to her.

"You have a seemingly experienced assistant," he said, glancing at Aunt Dorcas. "For yourself, I should say this responsibility was a new one, but you must not allow yourself to be frightened," with a kindly smile.

"Then you think there is danger?" hesitatingly.

"Not at present. There may be. At any rate, it would be as well to send for Mrs. Armadale."

He spoke reassuringly, but in her quick,

upward glance Kate saw he had not told her all he feared ; and when he had gone to the parlor to talk to Carl, she gave baby a tight little clasp that said a great deal. She had learned to love pretty Barbara so, and she had learned to see so clearly how these children were the affectionate little creature's very heart-strings, that she could not bear the idea of her coming back to find them in danger, or perhaps (she thought it with a faint shiver) worse. At any rate she would try to take her place and be faithful, and she bent down and kissed the tiny face again.

She was very busy all the evening, but she was not too busy to watch anxiously for the postman's arrival, and when he came she listened eagerly to the announcement of the letters. There might be one from Mrs. Armadale, and if so, half her anxiety would be lifted off her mind.

"Mr. Armadale," said the man's voice. "Two for Mr. Seymour, two for Miss Davenant. That's all."

"Two for Miss Davenant," she thought, wonderingly. "Where can the second be from?"

They were brought up to her soon after. One evidently from Barbara, the other a blue-enveloped epistle, with a commonplace business-like look about it that dispelled her curiosity.

"Looks like a circular of some kind," she said, indifferently. "People forget I am nothing but a governess;" and she laid it aside carelessly, and opened Barbara's envelope.

It was not a very long letter, and evidently written under pressure of some little mysterious excitement, but it was very affectionate and cheerful. Kate felt almost heart-sick when she saw how cheerful and free from doubt it was. Messages for Johnny and Clara, and kisses for the baby, love to Carl, and affectionate hopes that Kate would not find her position irksome.

That was all; and then came a sentence that made the poor girl actually grow pale with the renewed weight of her forebodings.

"I do not know where I shall be when you hear from me again. We leave Washington to-night, but have not decided on our route."

That was an unexpected blow. For, after

what the doctor had said, Carl had resolved to telegraph to Washington for his sister. But now Barbara would be gone before the telegram could reach her. Nor could any telegram find her till she got to New Orleans. She dropped the letter from her hands with something of terror in her expression.

"What shall I do?" she said. "Oh! what shall I do if the children become worse?"

It seemed as if she was to be fairly shaken, for the next moment Johnny stirred in his bed with a little moaning cry. She got up and went to him, and touched his forehead.

"Are you awake, Johnny?" she said, trying to speak cheerfully. "Don't you want to see mamma's letter?"

He gave a sharp turn, tossing his hands upward, and staring blankly into her face with a look that made her feel faint and sick.

"It is something terrible, I am sure," she said to Aunt Dorcas, who was just entering. "I think I had better go and speak to Mr. Seymour again."

There was no one else she could speak to. She felt that in her sudden sense of terror, and she forgot everything but Barbara and



Barbara's children, as she went down stairs to find Carl.

He had been reading the letters he had received, and had tossed them upon the table. He was standing upon the hearth, and as she came in he turned round sharply with a startled look at her anxious face.

She went to him, and took Barbara's letter out of her pocket.

"The postman brought me this letter from Mrs. Armadale," she said. "She left Washington yesterday, and she says she does not know where they make their next stoppage. Oh! what shall we do? I am afraid the children are in danger. Johnny has awakened, and does not know me."

Even in his trouble he could not help but notice one little phrase she had used. What shall "we" do she had said; and when she said it, she spoke as any other girl would have spoken who had felt a sense of reliance upon his greater strength in the hour of trial.

He read the letter to the end, and then handed it back to her.

"It is too late even to telegraph now," he

said. "Great heaven! if anything should happen——"

"I don't see that we can do anything but hope for the best," she interrupted. "Aunt Dorcas is very faithful, and—and I will try——" and there she broke off, because the excitement had made her voice unsteady and she could not trust it.

The doctor had promised to call again late in the evening; and at eight o'clock he came, and found Mrs. Armadale's "Juno" sitting by Johnny's bed, and bathing his small, hot hands with cologne.

What he thought of the matter may be gleaned from a remark he made to his wife on his return home.

"I like Junos, my dear," he said, "and I always liked this Juno in particular; but when I saw her watching that child with her handsome face, as tender as a pretty girl's, I wanted to kiss her. Mrs. Armadale's babies will be taken care of, I am sure of that."

After he had left the nursery bedroom he stopped, talking with Carl a short time in the hall; and when he had gone, Mr. Seymour sent a message up stairs, to the effect that he

should like to see Miss Davenant for a few minutes.

He stopped his impatient walk across the floor when she came, and offered her a chair.

"I cannot stay," she said, gravely. "You wanted to see me about——"

It seemed as if he wished to see what effect the words he spoke would have upon her, for he came and stood behind the chair, and laid his hands on its back, and looked at her with his cold, haughty eyes.

"I thought it only right to inform you that Dr. Chaloner has told me what this sickness appears to be. It is scarlet-fever, Miss Davenant, and there is great danger in it. Of course, we cannot expect you to risk your life——"

She stopped him here, lifting her head proudly, and coloring to her forehead.

"Thank you for your caution," she said, with a faint sting of bitterness in her tone. "I dare say you mean to be kind, but with your permission I will run the risk. Mrs. Armadale left her children in my care, and I mean to be true to the trust. I don't know what you think of me, Mr. Seymour," turning suddenly, "but

I am not wholly heartless, and I love the children ; and because I love them I will try to take their mother's place." And she turned round and went out of the room, and left him standing alone.

It was not a very calm face, but still it was a sufficiently steady one that she presented to Aunt Dorcas's criticisms when she went up stairs again.

"It is more serious than I thought," she said. "The children have scarlet-fever, aunty, and we must prepare for some hard work."

## CHAPTER XV.

## IT WAS YOURS.

CLARA was sent down stairs to remain in her uncle's care, and be kept out of the way, for, as yet, she had complained of nothing serious, and they tried to hope that she would escape the infection.

Then Kate set about her tasks in prospective quietly. She bathed her face and hands with cologne, brushed her hair back into a great knot, and changed her dress for a light, cool, wrapper. There are some women who do everything gracefully and without losing their self-possession. Kate Davenant was one of them. It is astonishing what a woman can and will do when her heart is in her work. In after days, Kate looked back at the dreary hours of danger and suffering that followed with a shudder, wondering how she had lived through them. It was no light responsibility and no light labor that fell into her unaccustomed hands then. Sometimes she sickened, and grew faint under its burden, and needed all her strength of

will and purpose to rouse herself to fitness for it.

For a week she never left the nursery bedroom, hardly daring to sleep in her anxiety. Johnny lay upon his bed scorched with fever and wildly delirious, moaning for water sometimes, and crying for his mother; baby wailed and fretted and slept by turns; and as a finishing stroke to all the evils, at the end of the week Clara dropped fainting on the parlor floor, and was brought up to the sick-room to be nursed with the rest. Here was an unique position for the Circe!

The day Clara was taken ill, Carl carried her up stairs in his arms and staid with her all night. When he first entered, Kate was sitting by Johnny, with baby lying across her shoulder, as she leaned her head wearily against the chair-back; and a fierce throb shook his heart as he noted her white face and the purple shadows round her eyes. Short as they were, those seven days had absolutely changed her. When he had left Dorcas with Clara, he came back into the nursery, feeling as if some force controlled him.

"Kate," he said, for he forgot everything in

his new pity for her, and spoke as he would have spoken to Barbara, "you must leave Johnny to me and go and sleep. Another week of such labor and watching will kill you."

Perhaps she had grown weak that his kindly tone touched her so; at any rate, she glanced up at him with a softened smile.

"I could not go to sleep if I lay down," she said, trying to speak cheerfully. "I don't like to leave them for a moment. Look at Johnny's face," and she drew down the coverlet.

The poor little fellow's temples looked shrunken and hollow, a great scarlet spot blazed on each cheek, and his eyes were heavily closed.

"He has not spoken since yesterday." She did not care to control herself now, and the sudden tears choked her voice. "Oh! I wish Mrs. Armadale would come home!"

Carl looked down at the sweet, white face, thrilled to his very soul. There was something in it which he was beginning to understand, but which he had never understood before. Something of latent truth, something of what she had suffered, which now in her

trouble was not hidden by any of the perfect acting. It was months since she had come to his house, and every day had been a slow step to the ending of the story. For months he had struggled with his fate, and now, as the soft eyes raised up to his and fell again, he felt that all the struggles, and bitterness, and contempt were as nothing, and that he stood to-night just where he had stood when their eyes met in the little theater at Newport, nearly four years ago. He had tried to hate her, and learned to love her because her sweet eyes were so tender; and as she stood there with Barbara's baby in her arms, she seemed to blot out some of the past, and her red lips drooped as little Kathleen's might have done in such a womanhood as this. When she had sung the pretty lullaby, his heart had wakened to passionate regret and yearning; the one moment in which her soft cheek had touched his breast had opened his eyes to the truth; and now, in spite of himself and his pride, he must needs speak a little of that truth in his remorse for the times when he could see he had been cruel, if he had been just.

"You must let me help you," he said. "You



have taken too heavy a burden upon yourself."

She looked up quickly, and then turned her face away. She did not mean to repulse him, but there was a ring in his voice that seemed almost a mockery, it recalled so much to her. But, simple as the movement was, it stung him.

"Cannot we forget the old wrongs for a while?" he said, bitterly. "Or are we to be enemies forever?"

For a moment she hardly cared to raise her face, the red had shot so sharply over its white. Like a man, he had misunderstood her, and, like a woman, she must hide her pain, so she answered him as bitterly as he had spoken.

"This is no time to remember wrongs," she said. "I don't want to remember them. I think we had better forgive each other till the children get well, Mr. Seymour." But as she spoke, great hot tears leaped into her eyes, and stood there, and he saw them.

Just the pebble in the pool, but the ripples were circling to the shore.

For the last week the girl had been suffering

through her whole being in her battle with herself and her reawakened pain, but the stern necessity for self-control forced her to be strong where she might otherwise have been weak. She found no time to ask herself questions, and sometimes she was almost thankful for it.

From the evening that he brought Clara up stairs in his arms, Carl Seymour gave her no chance to forget his presence in the house. Every day he was in the sick-room, sometimes bringing fruit, sometimes a few flowers; but, whatever his errand, always leaving behind him something of comfort, or hope, or rest for the sick-nurse. Every action was quietly, almost coldly done; but, after a day or so, Kate began to notice, and was not sorry for the evidence, that actual warfare was over. At any rate, she said to herself, it was sympathy, and just then sympathy, even from an enemy, would have been acceptable. Once, as he passed through the room, he laid a bunch of white flowers upon the table at her side. "They will refresh you," he said, coolly, and then went on; and she found herself gazing at them blankly, for they were just such flowers as she

had thrust aside when John Crozier came to Newport. She went to smooth Clara's pillow with a half sob rising in her throat and suffocating her.

"If Mrs. Armadale would come home," she would say to herself. "If Mrs. Armadale would only come."

And at last she made up her mind that when the trouble was over, she would try her fortune at some far-away place, where there were at least no ghosts to haunt her.

But, in spite of everything, just what good had been hidden and smothered in her worldliness, showed itself in those days.

There was no time to act and diplomatize—no time to feel bitter. What nothing else on earth could have done, the two weeks of unromantic labor did—made these two enemies forget the fierce smart of self-contempt and old regret. They were drawn together because they could not possibly have kept apart. Because she was compelled to rely upon him and trust to his assistance, Kate learned to shut her eyes calmly to everything that could have made the compulsory intercourse unpleasant. Because she must rely upon him, and he upon

her, and, perhaps, for other reasons, Carl forgot his wrongs. Still it was nearly two weeks before anything of the truth reached the surface.

It was late one evening, and as she sat by the fire, with baby on a pillow on her lap, Carl found himself watching her and wondering. He was trying to call to mind the Circe, with the dangerous eyes and scarlet cheeks, who had laughed at Tom Griffith; the Circe who had coldly used her fascinations and her beauty because it pleased her to outdo other women. It was not easy to place the two side-by-side and call them by one name, they seemed so far apart.

Would she live the same life again if Fortune turned the chances toward her? Would she amuse herself with her human bagatelle-board as she had done before, and forget everything else? Just now, as the firelight struck on the glitter of her bent head, and danced over the shadows of her black dress, it showed her dreaming eyes full of wistfulness. She did not know at first that he was looking at her, she was so full of thought, but in a few minutes some magnetic influence made her

turn toward him quickly, and meeting his eyes, she colored, hardly knowing why. Just as swiftly as she had looked up she looked down again. She had grown afraid of herself lately, and did not care to trust her face to his scrutiny. Then there was a long silence, such a long silence that she thought its stillness would force her to speak.

He had come into the nursery to look at the children, and he was leaning his elbow upon the mantel, and gazing down at her. What was he thinking of? she asked herself impatiently. What was he going to say? She felt as if she was waiting for something.

And so she was, unconsciously, it appeared, for suddenly he drew something from his pocket, and held it out to her without speaking a word. Her first glance at it made her start, and then the red deepened and glowed upon her skin until cheeks and forehead burned hot. It was a slender gold chain. The firelight glittered on it as it was suspended from his hand, and a little onyx cross hung to it—a little Gothic cross, tipped with gold.

The ripples were very near the shore then.

She hardly knew what to say, and an exclamation broke forth almost unconsciously.

"You kept it?" she said.

He bent his head.

"It dropped from your neck and caught upon my coat when you fell. I kept it because— Well, it was yours, and you wore it at Newport, Kate."

How near the ripples were.

She took it from his outstretched hand, her own trembling in spite of herself; and in spite of herself again, another question leaped out.

"Was it because I wore it at Newport that you kept it?"

"Yes," he said, with a faint echo of bitterness in his voice. "It is not so easy to forget, you see."

Proud man as he was, bitter, and cruel, and harsh as he had been, her tender eyes and tender voice touched his innermost soul, and shook its strength.

I said before that once conquered, this man was conquered wholly and forever. And if you, my reader, could have seen the pallor of his haughty face, you would have acknowledged that I spoke truly.

She held the chain for a moment, looking at it, and then she extended it to him again.

"I will not take it from you if you would like to keep it. We have both said hard words to each other, Mr. Seymour, but we have been friends for a week now, and I, for one, am not inclined to break the truce."

She smiled up into his eyes as she said it, and tried to speak carelessly; but it was a hard struggle that helped her to maintain her self-possession.

"Do you mean this?" he asked her.

She bent her head, still holding out the chain, with the Circe's smile.

"Why not?"

He took it and began to wind it round his fingers.

"You are a true woman," he said, "and so are wise. I am a true man, and so not wise. Since you have been here, I have said things to you which had better have been left unsaid. Try to forget them." And he turned on his heel and went out of the room without another word.

If her position had seemed hard to her before, it seemed harder now. Woman-like, she

would have gone along smoothly without a passing hint of the undercurrent ; but he, with exasperating masculine pertinacity, must needs touch the half-healed wounds, perhaps feeling some aggrandizement in his own pain. Blame him, if you like—call him a weak fool ; I have only one thing to say—he loved her. It you are a man, and have some time loved a woman, you will understand how he might act madly ; if you are a woman, and have ever loved, you will forgive for it.

Carl went to his room that night, not to sleep, but to hold that glittering chain upon his finger, and look at it, and sneer at himself, and call himself hard names, and then to ponder over the pretty picture he had left behind him in the nursery.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## A TURN OF THE WHEEL.

IT was daylight before Kate left her seat at the fire where she had sat dreaming. Toward morning Johnny fell asleep, and baby seemed better, and at Aunt Dorcas' decisive command Kate relinquished her post and lay down. She passed the mirror as she went to the couch, and caught a glimpse of herself. She shrugged her shoulders a little at the white face, and shadowy eyes. Her belt-ribbon had actually grown loose, and she fancied she saw faint lines round her mouth. What had brought them there? Anxiety, perhaps, and, perhaps something else. Well, it could not last forever; and after this was all over, she could go away and make up her mind to settle down into a middle-aged woman.

"There are women who lead such lives," she said. "Ah, me! I suppose I have done with the rest, but I can't quite reconcile it with the Circe. Whose fault is it, though?" She asked herself the question sharply, and then as

sharply turned away and went to the couch and lay down, burying her face in the cushions.

The doctor came again early in the morning, and after looking at his patients, announced a decided improvement.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked, turning upon Kate. "If you were any one else, I should say you had been crying all night like a baby."

She shook her head with a faint smile.

"But I am not any one else," she said, "and I don't cry—often. I am only tired."

But, shall I tell you, reader, that there was a little hypocrisy in her quiet face, for if she had not cried like a baby, at least she had lain awake with an uncomfortable throb in her throat, and hot tears starting now and then to her eyes, because the little cross, glittering in the firelight, and the haughty, cynical face seemed to taunt her so.

"Try to forget them," he had said, and in saying it, had brought back to her everything of remembrance.

"If Mrs. Armadale would only come home," she said over to herself; and that day her wish

was realized. She hardly knew why, but toward evening she began to feel somewhat more hopeful. The children seemed quieter, and, for one thing, Mr. Seymour had kept his room, and she had regained her composure, and she found herself looking back over the three weeks as something which was almost a thing of the past. It was four o'clock, and she had just taken her place by Johnny, when one of the servants came to the door, looking not a little flurried.

"If you please——" she began, and then stopped.

Kate looked up as she fed Johnny with a spoonful of jelly.

"What is the matter?" She was not easily frightened, and spoke quite composedly.

"There's a carriage coming up the drive, ma'am," said the girl, "and we think maybe it's Mrs. Armadale."

Kate laid her glass and spoon down, it must be confessed, with a sudden leap of the heart. What if they had not received any of the telegrams, or letters, and were coming home to meet the news as a shock.

"Lie down, Johnny," she said, and left the

room, and went down stairs just in time to meet Carl coming out of the parlor.

"They are coming," he said, anxiously. "I wonder if they received our letters?"

"I shall meet them at the door," said Kate, decidedly. "If Mrs. Armadale does not know, I think I can best tell her myself."

But she was spared the task, for in three minutes the carriage had stopped, and poor little Mrs. Armadale almost burst from it, her pretty, young face perfectly deathly.

"Oh, Kate!" she said, in a little storm of self-reproaching sobs. "Oh, Kate! we never knew till Wednesday, on our way back from New Orleans, when we had an old telegram at Augusta, and—and tell me the worst."

"It is not so very bad," said Kate, following her, for she was actually on her way to the nursery before she had finished speaking. "They had the fever only in a mild form, and baby was very much weakened. I don't think there is any danger now."

But Barbara had rushed into the sick-room, and was bending over the cradle, trying in vain to choke back her sobs as she lifted her little one in her arms.

"I—I can't help it," she said to Kate. "Oh! my poor little babies!" And then she was kissing Johnny and crying softly over him, and patting Clara's pillow and petting her, and talking to Kate all at once. "What should I have done without you?" she said. "How can I thank you? And, oh! my best, patient dear, look at your pale cheeks!"

After her excitement was quieted somewhat, she insisted on wrapping Kate in a soft shawl, and making her lie down on the sofa to rest.

To tell the truth, now that the burden of responsibility was taken from her, this before unconquered Kate began to feel tired, and when she was fairly ensconced on the sofa, fell asleep, and slept with most unheroic soundness.

It was late when she awakened, and by the light of the fire she saw Barbara sitting by her in the rocking-chair, rocking to and fro, and evidently waiting impatiently for her awakening.

"I am glad you have finished your sleep," she said, "I am so impatient to talk everything over. Kate, what *did* you think when you got Alf's letter! I always told him it

would turn out so. It's like a romance, only there was so little mystery about it. They say Mr. Davenant was killed on the spot. He had always been a fast man, you know——"

Miss Davenant sat up in her lounge with a little extra color on her cheeks, and not a little extra beating at her heart. What did all this mean?

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Armadale," she said; "But I don't understand. I never received any letter from Mr. Armadale. I never——"

Barbara broke in upon her.

"You don't understand?" she echoed. "You never received a letter? Alf wrote to you the day we left Washington."

Just then, and not till then, did something of remembrance flash across Kate's mind. What about the envelope she had laid aside and forgotten in her anxiety? She got up and went to the mantel-piece. Yes, there it was, just as she had left it without breaking the seal. She did not sit down, she stood up just where she was, and tore it open and glanced at the signature, "Alfred Armadale," and then she read the letter through. When she had fin-

ished, she looked up at Barbara, blood in her cheeks rising redly, a great flash of something in her eyes. At last! at last! Fortune had turned the tables once more. Her father's brother, who had never even seen her, had died from a fall from his horse; died without children and without a will; and she was his heir. Oddly enough, the thought that rose highest in the tumult of her mind was the most commonplace of thoughts. She was not to be a middle-aged governess after all; she was not to grow old, and bitter, and faded, over music-lessons and French grammars. Mercenary this, of course, but permit me to say it was very natural. If she wished now, she might go away from this terrible galling and humiliation, and perhaps forget it all.

"I never read this letter before," she said to Barbara. "I was so anxious, that I laid it down and forgot it. I don't know what to say. I can hardly believe it's true. My uncle was so angry with my father for the wrong he did my mother, that he would not even see me."

Barbara got up quietly and went to her, and kissed her on both cheeks.

"I hope it will make you happy my dear," she said. "I must congratulate you, but I cannot congratulate myself. I shall lose my friend and my governess."

Twice in four years had Fate flung a golden grape into Kate Davenant's hands. The first time it had only added fresh bitterness to her lot: this second time it brought her relief, not happiness.

Mr. Davenant was dead—killed by a fall from a wild, unmanageable horse; and whether she deserved it, or not, Miss Davenant was an heiress again, representing substantially twenty thousand a year, and two establishments.

There was no excitement in her manner as she sat by Mr. Armadale, at the table in the library that night, and entered into the particulars of her business. Her face was quite calm and business-like, and while she listened to his statements and replied to his inquiries, she was playing with a pen-holder, and smiling now and then faintly. Mr. Armadale had heard all the points of the case, and only some few legal formalities must be gone through before she could take possession.

It was ten o'clock before their work was



finished, and then the gentleman congratulated her warmly.

Seymour had been sitting with them reading, and as his brother-in-law spoke, he glanced up quickly and looked at Miss Davenant.

She was standing by the table, resting one hand upon it, and toying with the pen-holder, her downcast eyes a little thoughtful. The bright lamplight was concentrated upon her, and showed the white-browed patrician face and Clytie head poised half haughtily, half carelessly. Her long, black dress made her look white and slender with its sombre heaviness; the great waves of burnished hair were twisted in a massive knot on the slim, shapely neck, and there was a deep scarlet spot on either cheek. She was a beautiful woman, as much the Circe as ever; she was a beautiful picture, and the touching tenderness of her smile made her dazzling.

"Does money make people happy?" she asked, lifting her soft eyes. "If it does, you know, I shall be happy, for I can buy twenty thousand dollars' worth of happiness every year. But then if it does not, I might only be

an heiress, after all, in spite of your kind wish—and the thousands.”

She only spoke half seriously; but when she ended, her voice shook a little in the face of her smiles, and there was a touch of truth in the almost imperceptible tremor of her red lower-lip, that filled the man with a mad longing to go to her and wind his arm around her waist, and quench the pride in her proud face with kisses that should force her heart to speak truly. But men don't do these things, you know, and he could only look at her a little longer, wondering if her sweet eyes had made a madman of him.

She came to the fire when she had done with Mr. Armadale, and stood upon the hearth, resting her arched foot on the fender in her favorite fashion, and smiling upon him with the Circe's witchery. She was free now, you see, no longer a dependent or menial; perhaps, after a month's time, they might never meet again—and, besides, she could afford it. Her thousands had bought her that right, at least.

“Won't you congratulate me, Mr. Seymour?” she asked. “Or do you think I am a

better nurse than heiress? I want to hear you say you are glad for my sake."

"Which must I congratulate you upon first?" he said. "Your happiness, or your riches, or both at once?"

"For both at once. The riches are to buy the happiness, you know. How much shall I get for twenty thousand dollars, I wonder?"

"A great deal, I hope," he answered her. "I congratulate you with all my heart, Miss Davenant."

She went out of the room directly afterward, and the last glimpse he caught of her face, as she closed the door, showed him the faint smile lying around her lips still; but when she stood in the hall alone it faded, and the lights of the swinging lamp swam a little through the mist over her eyes, and when she went slowly up the broad staircase it was gone altogether, and there was nothing but a faint curve upon the red mouth.

It seemed as if Barbara's presence acted upon her children like a spell, for, from the time she kissed and cried over them, they recovered gradually.

"But how can I ever thank Kate?" said

Barbara, to her husband and Mr. Seymour. "Dorcas says she never left them for an hour; and Dr. Chaloner told me that she saved baby just with her never-tiring care. It is so odd, how naturally a woman loves children: but then Kate is so good."

And even during the recovery Kate's goodness did not diminish. She would stay with Mrs. Armadale until everything was arranged, she said; and then, when the invalids were better, they must come and help her to take possession of her own country-seat.

"You must get married," said Alf. "You ought to be married, Miss Daverant."

She laughed at him with brilliant cheeks, and lifted her arched, brown brows.

"Ought! Why, Mr. Armadale? Do I need somebody to manage me, or somebody to manage?"

"You need both," laughed Alf. "You have relied upon yourself too long, and you want a master!"

Mr. Seymour did not say very much; but, speaking truly, this young lady who "needed a master," was not comfortable in his presence. Her delicate skin had a trick of flaming sud-

denly and hotly under his glance; and her eyelids were too apt to lower and droop when he spoke; so, whenever it was possible, she kept out of his way. Toward him, she was brilliant, and dazzling, and fascinating; just as she had been at Newport, only now holding her heart in a leash with something of shame. He loved her, she knew; he had not forgiven her, she thought; he could not respect her, she was sure: accordingly, she must sneer herself down, and so she tried hard to do it—with just such success as might be expected.

CHAPTER XVII.

MAVOURNEEN—MAVOURNEEN.

ONE day she actually went into her room and lighted a wax taper, so that she might burn the souvenirs in her desk. And when she had taken them out and looked at them (she did not attempt to read them)—guess what she did?

She bent over them with flaming cheeks, almost unconsciously, lower, lower, until her soft lips touched a card with Carl's name written upon it, and then she started back and pushed them aside angrily, and crushed them together, and locked them in the drawer again, and after blowing out the taper, left the room. She *dare* not do it! She had found her master, and now, after conquering and scorning others, had come to the bitter sense of scorning herself.

It was a month before the business was fairly settled, and by that time Kate said she was tired of it.

Davenant Place was ready for her reception,

wrote the late owner's steward, and many things required her presence there. Did she want the green-houses kept up? What was to be done with the horses?

"I suppose I had better go," said the young lady, twisting the note in her fingers, and shrugging her graceful shoulders; and accordingly she began to make her preparations. Was she sorry? She said so to Mrs. Armadale, when that lady talked to her about her prospects; she said so to Mr. Armadale; she said so to the children, who were now convalescent. She did not say so to Carl. She told him she was going, and laughed a little, triumphant laugh, as if she enjoyed the idea of her power in perspective. She was sitting in the parlor, leaning back in the very chair she had sat in the first evening of her arrival, and her fair hands were crossed idly on her lap, when they talked about it first.

"I *am* glad," she said. "I wanted the money, and I have got it. I love Mrs. Armadale, and I love the children; but I did not want to be a governess all my life. Was that wrong?" she asked, with a sudden bright lifting of her face to his, which was just such an

audacious piece of acting as no other woman would have dared, for all the while she was faint and sick at heart.

No, he thought not. How could it be wrong? And then he looked at her, and her cheeks grew hot, and she was fain to turn her head away.

She was not going to be a belle, she told Mrs. Armadale, she was going to be Lady Bountiful, and nurse the sick, and make flannel night-caps for rheumatic pensioners; so her preparations need not be extensive, and besides, she wanted to make the most of her time. So, when her trunks were packed, she nursed baby and talked nonsense to him, and told Johnny stories, and sung little songs for Clara, generally ending with a faint mist over her eyes. And Carl, sitting in his studio, heard her sweet voice in the nursery, and the rustle of her robes in the passages, and having heard, flung his brush aside, and hid his face upon his folded arms with a bitter pang.

"It might have been!" he said. "Ah, Kathleen! Mavourneen! Mavourneen!"

How they would miss her! They all found it out, and talked about it, and, listening to



them, he wakened to the stern truth that he loved her still, and should miss her, too ; and when she was gone the whole house would seem lonely to him.

As for her, she was almost glad that the time had come when the ghosts might be exorcised. She grew feverish and impatient, and sometimes awakened at night startled and nervous, and lay sleepless, wondering wearily how long her life would be, and if there would come no change in it, and if she would live and grow old, a rich, lonely woman to the end. She would try to be kind, she thought vaguely, and Barbara, and Barbara's children should come and stay with her, and she would help them to enjoy their innocent lives with her grand, lonely house, and her riches.

And then she supposed she would get old and faded, and there would be an end of life at last. But in some way, generally, at this conclusion (being twenty-three and a woman) she forgot her philosophy, and felt impatient, even while she did not allow herself to ask what the impatience meant.

About three nights before their expected separation, Mrs. Armadale's governess came

into the nursery for a final chat. Every one had retired, and after undressing to go to bed, Miss Davenant came into the room. A large, soft-looking scarlet shawl was wrapped round her, which was by no means brighter-colored than her soft cheeks; and she had loosened her hair and was going to fasten it up for the night.

"I wanted to talk a little," she said, with a sigh; so she seated herself on a low chair by the fire. "I—I don't know quite how it is, but I feel rather egotistical to-night. I want to talk about myself."

"Then talk, please," said Mrs. Armadale, "I am sure I shall be glad to hear. What is it?"

There was a short silence, in which Miss Davenant twisted a great shining roll of hair round her fingers, and looked into the fire meditatively.

"I don't know," she said at last, with a soft little laugh, that sounded like a soft little sob. "I wonder if you could tell me, Mrs. Armadale?"

Barbara's eyes were raised slowly and fixed with a keen inquiry upon the fair face.

"Kate my dear," she said in her affectionate voice, "I think you can tell best yourself."

Kate glanced up quickly.

"You remember what I told you once before," she said. "I mentioned no names, for I could not betray others. Well it is the same story over again. I am tired of—myself. I don't know what to do with—myself."

Barbara laid her hand upon the girl's arm.

"You told me something else," she said, softly. "You told me that you had done a great wrong in doing what you did; you said that you had loved the man you wronged better than any one else. Is it quite out of your power to repair the wrong you did?"

She did not answer at first. Her heart beat fast and impatiently.

"I never can repair it!" she said, lacing the heavy scarlet fringe of her shawl through her fingers. "A woman may not speak as a man may. Because I am a woman, I must keep my penitence to myself. I am unhappy, and I must profess to be happy. What a life we women lead!"

"You said your romance ended four years ago," began Barbara again, after a pause.

"Yes," in a low voice; "four years ago."

"When—when you were at Newport?"

"Yes."

Both pairs of eyes raised softly and met with a flash; then one pair drooped, and Kate turned her head away.

It was some minutes before they spoke again, and then the conversation seemed to flag a little.

Barbara's heart was full to the brim. Just the one quick, upward glance had told her all, and there seemed nothing more to be said. Still the clock struck twelve before they separated. As the last chime rung out upon the stillness, Miss Davenant rose from her seat and wound the scarlet shawl round her white-robed form. Then she stopped before Mrs. Armadale, a trifle hesitatingly.

"I want to say something to you before I go away," she said, in a low voice. "I want to thank you for something. Mrs. Armadale, when I came here first I was bitter and worldly and disappointed. I had met with nothing but selfishness and scheming—and I was selfish and scheming myself. I don't think I had seen the fair side of life. I did not expect to

be happy! I only expected to earn my salary like a servant, and hold my own, because my pride helped me. I had no mother to take care of me," her voice faltered a little, "and so I was obliged to take care of myself. But when I came here, it seemed as if my eyes were opened. You were happy, and your husband was happy, and so were your children; and yet, when you married Mr. Armadale, you had forgotten everything but that you loved him. I am twenty-three years old, Mrs. Armadale," her voice dropped, and broke down into a tremor of passionate sobs. "I am twenty-three years old, and you are the first woman who has loved me, and kissed me, because I was a girl and lonely. I shall never forget it—I never can forget. You have shown me how happy a good woman may be. I want to thank you for being kind to me."

Both Barbara's arms were folded round her, and Barbara's soft cheek was pressed against hers. It seemed as if the loving little creature's heart was full almost to breaking.

"Oh, my dear!" she said, between her kindly kisses; "if I have ever made you feel less lonely, how happy I am! I loved you always from the

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first, and I tried to think of you as if you had been my own little Clara grown into a woman, I hope you will be happy, and I think you will. In the end, perhaps, I shall see you some good man's wife, loving your husband, and loving your children, and thanking God. I hope I shall, my dear, I hope I shall!" And she held the fair face a little from her, and kissed it again and again.

The next day passed quietly, one might say dully, and, at last, when evening came, Mr. Armadale and his wife, and Carl and Kate were in the parlor, talking by the firelight.

"Don't let us have any other light," said Miss Davenant. "Darkness suits my mood this evening."

She was restless and excited. Barbara had never seen her so brilliant before, and looked at her scarlet cheeks uneasily.

She sat in the red glow of the fire, talking to them just as she only could talk, flinging out flashes of graceful nonsense and wit that were almost dazzling. There was a vein of sarcasm through it all which was bewitching, in spite of its being sarcasm: and she looked so like the Circe, with her delicate flushes and great

purple eyes, her soft voice, and her wonderful smile, that Carl found himself startled, and listening to her with something like a pang. She sneered a little, half as though she was in jest, at her experience; and she was not afraid to laugh, as she acknowledged how the world had cheated her.

It was late when they all retired, at least all, to speak correctly, but Carl, who, left to himself, drew his chair nearer the fire and bent over it, pondering in the dead silence. She was going away to-morrow, and then all would be over. The pictured face up-stairs had smiled upon him from its frame as he went out of the door, and there was a fancy in his mind now that he would hide the pictures out of sight, and leave his home to Barbara and her children, and go away to try and fill his life with travel and hard work. The sight of Kate's sweet face had tortured him, but the loss of it would drive him mad.

He had been sitting alone half an hour, with these thoughts making themselves half distinct to his mind, when he heard some one coming down stairs softly, and then the door swung open, and Miss Davenant entered, evidently

thinking the room unoccupied. She had come down on an unexpected errand, it appeared. The scarlet had left her cheeks, and in contrast with the heavy sombreness of her dark, sweeping purple, she looked wonderfully like the marble Clytie in her whiteness.

She came to the table, and after some searching took up a little volume, and then it was that she caught sight of Carl, and turned round.

"I beg your pardon," she said, with a slight start. "I did not expect to find any one here. I came for a book I left."

She approached the hearth as she spoke, evidently with something of effort to retain her self-possession, and as the red light struck upon her, he saw there were faint shadows round her eyes, and a heaviness as of tears upon the lashes.

"The book is an old favorite of mine," she said; "and as I was locking my trunks I missed it. I leave to-morrow, you know."

"So soon?" he asked; and then, as if unconsciously, extended his hand for the book.

It was a pretty edition of Longfellow's *Evangeline*, and he had read extracts from



this same volume to her at Newport. One day he remembered—for how could he forget?—they had walked to the Spouting Rock together, and talked, as a man and woman will talk, of the heroine's fidelity; and now he thought he could almost see her face again, as she smiled and told him that none but a woman could have been so true. He hardly knew why, but he began to turn over the leaves slowly, with a half-defined wish to find the extract he had read.

There was a moment of silence after he had said, "So soon;" but at last it was broken by a restless movement on Kate's part, and he looked up at her. She was haughty, and, perhaps, a thought cold; but if she could have undone the past, she would have undone it; and now, as they must part, it might be forever, she wanted to make him what reparation she could. She had defied him before, and tried to humiliate him, and her worldly experience taught her that a man's worst grief is his humiliation, and so she tried to make his somewhat less bitter and complete. If she had been only Mrs. Armadale's governess, the words would never have been spoken; but now

she was free to dare to say them, and he could not see more in them than a proud woman humbled a little through her very pride's intensity.

"Yes," she said, in a low voice, "I am going away to-morrow. We have not been very good friends while we have been together, Mr. Seymour, but I don't want to leave an enemy behind me. I did you a great wrong four years ago, and—and I deserve any bitter thought you may have of me. I wanted to say this to you before I go away, because—because—because——"

Her voice faltered—shook—stopped. Carl had turned over the leaves of the book as he listened to her, and just at the end something had slipped from its pages and fallen upon the carpet. A scrap of sea-weed it was, dry and brown, and tied with a bit of silver cord in a lover's-knot. So insignificant it looked, so worthless, but it broke down the barriers of years.

He had picked it up from the sands that day at the Spouting Rock, and laid it in the book to mark the passage. She had laughed, and broken the cord from her glove, and tied

it in the quaint, old-fashioned knot, jestingly saying she would keep it as a souvenir, and showing it to him years after, would prove she had been a faithful—friend.

“Friend,” she had said, but the swift droop of her eyes had said more, and he had kissed her gloved hand as answer.

Ah, me! how fiercely the two hearts beat as it came to light again, with its freight of memory, and the faint scent of the salt sea about it! One moment she flushed, the next she paled, and then she stood still and waited to see what would come of it, every throb of her heart seeming like a great wrench.

He stooped down, white to the lips, picked it up, and then looked at her a moment in silence.

“You kept it?” he said, at last.

The very words she had used to him, but his voice was fairly hoarse.

It seemed as if she had staked all for nothing. She had acted her part for months, and now a little, brown sea-weed had shown that it was acting, and humbled her pride to the dust. It was no use now. She might as well tell the truth.

"Yes," she answered him. "I kept it, Mr. Seymour," and then she turned her face away.

He got up from his seat, and went to her, just as he had done that last day at Newport.

"Why?" he said.

The power lay in his hands now, and their places had changed.

She did not answer, she only looked up at him with her beautiful eyes.

"Tell me," he said again, "Tell me why?"

Then her pride, and resentment, and humiliation, broke forth.

"It was yours," she said, passionately, bitterly. "You gave it me at Newport, when we were both better than we are now. I have not forgotten, either. That is why. Now let me go!" And she tried to wrench her hands away from his grasp.

But he held them fast—fast and hard, in a fit of fierce despair.

"Are we never to forgive each other?" he cried. "Can we never forgive each other? There is a picture up stairs with a childish, innocent face. I loved you when you were that child, Kate; I loved you when you grew to be a woman; I have loved you all my life,

and—and you will either save my soul or ruin it. Let us try to forget the wrong we have done. Let us try to make the future more unselfish than the past has been. Be my wife, and so help me to regain what I have lost of heaven. Lift your sweet face to me—I want to see it! Oh! if the past had been only a dream, Kathleen! Mavourneen! Mavourneen!”

He clasped her in his arms as if she had been a child; he drew her head upon his breast; he pushed the heavy hair back, and kissed eyes, and cheeks, and lips, as none but a man who had lost and found a love could have done.

And she—this Circe, who for the first time in her twenty-three years of life had found her true place—flung all aside, and spoke as a woman will speak when her heart conquers her and forces her to be generous. They had suffered and been wrong, but his kisses bridged the old gulf, and made the suffering a thing forever dead.

“Forgive?” she echoed. “It was he who must forgive! It was he who must forget! Could it ever be? Could he trust her again?”

Between her sobs she said it, between his

kisses and tender words : and fresh kisses were his answer.

And then he sat down again, still with his arms clasped around her, and she knelt upon the hearth with her beautiful face hidden upon his breast, and drooping.

"Fourteen years!" she said, at last, "nearly fourteen years! If we could bring them back again and make them better! If we could bring back what we have lost!"

When a man loves a woman truly, there is but one thing in his life—the one thing is his love, all bears upon it, he has only one answer to all her words—that answer is, "I love you." So it was with Carl Seymour.

"Lost!" he echoed. "Never lost! Sad as those years have been, they have brought you to me, mavourneen! My darling! Mine!"

It was a long time before she told him John Crozier's story: but it was told at last.

"I was ill for a long time after you left Newport," she said. "They thought I was dying, and I hoped I was. But I got better, and I was so wretched that even my aunt, at last, advised me to break the engagement. Let us never speak of it again. Love me, and

try to trust me; but let us never, never look back upon that; the thought of it would make you love me less. Promise me," and she lifted her face.

And then he promised, and put love's ancient seal upon the pledge, a little reverently, and with such tenderness, that she knew that at last she was loved as a woman must be loved, as every woman should be loved, with a true heart and a great strength, and a faith as pure and perfect as a child's.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## AT LAST.

BARBARA bent over baby's cradle, and went on singing softly, looking up at Kate.

Kate had been late this morning, and when she came into the sunshiny room there was a soft rose-red on her cheeks, and the look of happy tears in her purple eyes.

Barbara knew what was coming. Barbara was a woman, and did not say much at first; she only sang over baby, and rocked the cradle with her pretty foot, and waited.

Kate loitered over the flower-stand for a while, and tried to talk, but at last she came into the deep, sunny window to Barbara, and stood there trifling with a late flower, the crimson fluttering softly on her face, and her lips a little parted.

"Did you find the 'Evangeline?'" asked Barbara, innocently, at last.

Miss Davenant's eyes lifted, and flashed through their veil of tears—she was so happy.



"Yes," she said. "And I found something else!"

Barbara's nonsense melted into an April shower.

"I know all about it," she said, softly. "Carl has told me. It makes me very happy. God has been good to you, my darling;" and she kissed her again. Just then the little one stirred in the cradle, and cooed, and caught at the sunbeams streaming through the window, just as children of a larger growth grasp at life's glitter; and Kate Davenant turned her face to the sunshine, too, with the tremor of last night's kisses upon her lips.

"God has been very good to me," she cried. "I think he has made me a child again, little Kathleen, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' once more!"

**PRETTY POLLY PEMBERTON**



# PRETTY POLLY PEMBERTON.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PRETTY POLLY P.

“FRAMLEIGH,” ventured little Popham, “You haven’t spoken for half an hour, by Jupiter!”

Framleigh—Capt. Gaston Framleigh, of the Guards—did not move. He had been sitting for some time before the window, in a position more noticeable for ease than elegance, with his arms folded upon the back of his chair; and he did not disturb himself when he condescended to reply to his youthful admirer and ally.

“Half an hour?” he said, with a tranquil, half drawl, which had a touch of affectation in its coolness, and yet was scarcely pronounced enough to be disagreeable, or even unpleasant. “Haven’t I?”

"No, you have not," returned Popham, encouraged by the negative amiability of his manner. "I am sure it is half an hour. What's up?"

"Up?" still half abstractedly. "Nothing! Fact is, I believe I have been watching a girl!"

Little Popham sprang down, for he had been sitting on the table, and advanced toward the window hurriedly, holding his cigar in his hand.

"A girl!" he exclaimed. "Where? What sort of a girl?"

"As to sort," returned Framleigh, "I don't know the species. A sort of girl I never saw before. But, if you wait, you may judge for yourself. She will soon be out there in the garden again. She has been darting in and out of the house for the last twenty minutes."

"Out of the house?" said Popham, eagerly, "Do you mean the house opposite?"

"Yes."

"By Jupiter!" employing his usual mild

expletive, "look here, old fellow, had she a white dress on, and geranium-colored bows, and——"

"Yes," said Framleigh. "And she is rather tall for such a girl; and her hair is cut on her round white forehead, Sir Peter Lely fashion (they call it banging, I believe), and she gives you the impression, at first, of being all eyes, great dark eyes, with——"

"Long, curly, black lashes," interpolated Popham, with enthusiasm. "By Jupiter! I thought so! It's pretty Polly P."

He was so evidently excited, that Framleigh looked up with a touch of interest, though he was scarcely a man of enthusiasm himself.

"Pretty Polly P.!" he repeated. "Rather familiar mode of speech, isn't it? Who is pretty Polly P.?"

Popham, a good-natured, sensitive little fellow, actually colored.

"Well," he admitted, somewhat confusedly, "I dare say it does sound rather odd, to people who don't know her; but I can assure you, Framleigh, though it is the name all our fel-

lows seem to give her with one accord, I am sure there is not one of them who means it to appear disrespectful, or—or even cheeky,” resorting, in desperation, to slang. “She is not the sort of girl a fellow would ever be disrespectful to, even though she is such a girl—so jolly and innocent. For my part, you know, I’d face a good deal, and give up a good deal, any day, for pretty Polly P.; and I’m only one of many.”

Framleigh half smiled, and then looked out of the window again, in the direction of the house opposite.

“Dare say,” he commented, placidly. “And very laudably, too. But you have not told me what the letter P. is intended to signify. ‘Pretty Polly P.’ is agreeable and alliterative, but indefinite. It might mean Pretty Polly Popham.”

“I wish it did, by Jupiter!” cordially, and with more color; “but it does not. It means Pemberton!”

“Pemberton!” echoed Framleigh, with an intonation almost savoring of disgust. “You

don't mean to say she is that Irish fellow's daughter?"

"She is his niece," was the answer, "and that amounts to the same thing, in her case. She has lived with old Pemberton ever since she was four years old, and she is as fond of him as if he was a woman, and her mother; and he is as fond of her as if she was his daughter; but he couldn't help that. Every one is fond of her."

"Ah!" said Framleigh. "I see. As you say, 'She is the sort of girl.'"

"There she is, again!" exclaimed Popham, suddenly.

And there she was, surely enough, and they had a full view of her, geranium-colored bows and all. She seemed to be a trifle partial to those geranium-colored bows. Not too partial, however, for they were very nicely put on, here and there, down the front of her white morning dress, one prettily adjusted on the side of her hair, one on each trim, slim, black kid slipper. If they were a weakness of hers, they were by no means an inartistic one. And



as she came down the garden-walk, with a little flower-pot in her hands—a little earthen pot, with some fresh glossy-leaved little plant in it—she was pleasant to look at, pretty Polly P.—very pleasant ; and Gaston Framleigh was conscious of the fact.

It was only a small place, the house opposite, and the garden was the tiniest of gardens, being only a few yards of ground, surrounded by iron railings. Indeed, it might have presented anything but an attractive appearance, had pretty Polly P. not so crowded it with bright bloom. Its miniature beds were full of brilliantly-colored flowers, blue-eyed lobelia, mignonette, scarlet geraniums, a thrifty rose or so, and numerous nasturtiums, with ferns, and much pleasant, humble greenery. There were narrow boxes of flowers upon every window-ledge, a woodbine climbed round the door, and, altogether, it was a very different place from what it might have been under different circumstances.

And down the graveled path, in the midst of all this flowery brightness, came Polly, with

her plant to set out, looking not unlike a flower herself. She was very busy, in a few minutes, and she went about her work almost like an artist, flourishing her little trowel, digging a nest for her plant, and touching it, when she transplanted it, as tenderly as if it had been a day-old baby. She was so earnest about it, that, before very long, Framleigh was rather startled by hearing her begin to whistle softly to herself, and, seeing that the sound had grated upon him, Popham colored and laughed apologetically.

"It is a habit of hers," he said. "She hardly knows when she does it. She often does things other girls would think strange. But she is not like other girls."

Framleigh made no reply. He remained silent, and simply looked at the girl. He was not in the most communicative of moods, this morning; he was feeling gloomy and depressed, and not a little irritable, as he did now and then. He had good reason, he thought, to give way to these fits of gloom, occasionally; they were not so much an unamiable habit as

his enemies fancied: he had some ground for them, though he was not prone to enter into particulars concerning it. Certainly, he never made innocent little Popham, "Lambkin Popham," as one of his fellow-officers had called him, in a brilliant moment, his confidant. He liked the simple, affectionate little fellow, and found his admiration soothing; but the time had not yet arrived, when the scales having fallen from his eyes, he could read such guileless, insignificant problems as "Lambkin" Popham clearly.

So his companion, only dimly recognizing the outward element of his mood, thought it signified a distaste for that soft, scarcely unfeminine, little piping of pretty Polly's, and felt bound to speak a few words in her favor.

"She is not a masculine sort of girl, at all, Framleigh," he said. "You would be sure to like her. The company fairly idolize her."

"Company!" echoed Framleigh. "What company?"

"Old Buxton's company," was the reply,

"the theatrical lot at the Prince's, you know, where she acts."

Framleigh had been bending forward, to watch Polly patting the mould daintily, as she bent over her flower-bed; but he drew back at this, conscious of experiencing a shock far stronger and more disagreeable than the whistling had caused him to feel.

"An actress!" he exclaimed, in an annoyed tone.

"Yes, and she works hard enough, too, to support herself, and help old Pemberton," gravely.

"The worse for her," with impatience. "And the greater rascal old Pemberton, for allowing it."

It was just at this moment that Polly looked up. She raised her eyes carelessly to their window, and doing so, caught sight of them both. Young Popham blushed gloriously, after his usual sensitive fashion, and she recognized him at once. She did not blush at all, herself, however; she just gave him an arch little nod, and a delightful smile, which showed her pretty,

white teeth; and then she went so far as to hold up for his inspection her hands, displaying to him the earth-stains the gardening operations had left.

"Let us—let us go across to her," burst forth little Popham. "I will introduce you, and——"

Framleigh opened his eyes.

"Let us!" he repeated. "By George! You don't stand on ceremony, it seems, with your little Polly P., if that is your style."

"She doesn't care about ceremony. You know, I told you she was not like other girls. It isn't her way to be ceremonious," explained her champion.

"I should judge not," from Framleigh, dryly; and then his eye, caught once more by the geranium-colored bows, he relented suddenly. "If it is allowable," he added, "let us go, by all means. She is a pretty creature."

It was only that outward charm he thought of as he spoke, and of that only he thought as he followed his companion down stairs. Only because she was a "pretty creature," and because his mood was a dull one, he cared to

speak to the girl. If the truth must be confessed, he was making the great blunder of rather superciliously classing her with a dozen or so other pretty actresses he had met. He had known many in his day, particularly in his budding youth, and his recollections of them, of the pink and pearl-powdered Celestines, and Maries, were not always of the pleasantest description. She might be a nice little girl enough, this pretty Polly P. Certainly she was nice enough to study through a window, but he scarcely cared to form her acquaintance.

Still he found himself following Popham down the stairs, and across the street; and the next thing, there he stood, on the narrow gravel-path, between the over-running borders of blue, deep, deep-blue lobelias; and Polly was looking straight into his eyes. It was a way of hers, to look very straight into a man's eyes, when she talked to him, and she looked very straight at Framleigh. Truth to tell, she was taking stock of him, somewhat severely. As to Framleigh himself, he was conscious of appearing rather inane and foolish. He had

nothing to say, and in a very few minutes began to anathematize Popham inwardly, for bringing him into the scrape.

"Your flowers seem to thrive wonderfully," he hazarded, as an original remark.

"My flowers always do," she answered. "I suppose it is because I am so fond of them."

"One may be sure of that," he returned, making a languid effort at tacking together such a gallant speech as would have pleased Marie or Celestine. "Their thriving would be a natural consequence of your being fond of them, of course."

If she had simpered, or blushed, it would have been just what he had expected; but she did neither; she opened her immense, densely-dark, gray eyes, gave her shoulders a little shrug, and laughed at him—"at," not "with" him, be it remarked—though her laugh was by no means ill-natured. But though she made no other comment, that one moment showed Framleigh his blunder, and proved to him that he had, by his own act, given this sharp, unrefined young woman the upper hand. She walked up the

short path with them, stopping every step or so to tie up a plant, or clear away a dead leaf, and it was toward Popham all her small efforts to please were directed. And her mode of entertaining him had a sort of originality in it. It would have been amusing to a man, in an amiable mood, to hear her odd talk. Her bits of gossip about theatres and the theatre people; her straightforward enjoyment of theatrical jokes; her unconscious tendency to innocent slang, was a racy enough combination, even if a trifle startling, at times, to people unused to the style.

"We are rehearsing a new piece, Mr. Popham," she said. "Something about a lot of French and German students. I am a grisette, with a horrible old mother, and there is a wicked marquis in it, who drugs me, and tries to run away with me; but Franz stops him. Franz is my lover, you know, with big, yellow mustaches, and long hair, and a big pipe. I am Desirée, and Josie Benson is Angeliqué; in fact, there are a lot of us; and we have a party at the room of Franz and Victor; and



we dance, and drink toasts, and I sing 'Vive l' Militaire,' because there is a little lieutenant there, and I want to make Franz jealous. Montmorenci is making my dresses now. Come into the house and see them."

Wondering who Montmorenci was, Framleigh obeyed Miss Polly's "This way, if you please," by following her into the parlor, a small, bright, square room, with much pretty, inexpensive adornment about it. "Montmorenci" was sewing at the window, and proved to be Polly's duenna, costumer, and commander-in-chief; and her rich Milesian accent was rather a grotesque accompaniment to her noble name. Truth to tell, report had whispered that "Montmorenci" was merely a result of the good taste of a manager, who, in Madame's theatrical days, had preferred that name to the less striking one of O'Whiffiker.

"An' is it wan of Mister Popham's friends ye are?" commented the lady. "On me sowl, then, I'm glad to say yez: fur it's Popham that's a good young man, an' a thrue friend to Polly there, ever since she was a slip of a gurl,

playin' in the 'Fairy Cave,' at the pantomime."

Framleigh bowed with a grave air, as he seated himself.

"When a man finds himself among such people," he was saying to himself, ill-humoredly, "he may as well resign himself to it as calmly as possible: but I wish I had stayed where I was, confound it!"

Yet, notwithstanding his irritated feelings—a feeling brought about, I may add, more by the consciousness that he had blundered, than by anything else, though he would not have confessed it—he watched Polly, in spite of himself. There was no denying that the girl was ten times handsomer than he had given her credit for at the first glance. She was taller than he had thought her, or looked taller in the little room; her figure was more perfect; the manner in which her head was set upon her shoulders was actually faultless; the round, white forehead, shadowed by that picturesque, quaint fringe of hair, so few women can affect without looking fast, was without fault too;

and her eyes—oh! her eyes, so mellow, so large-irised, so changeable—those great eyes themselves were a stage property, and without a single other attraction would have been worth so much per week.

“I wonder if she languishes at the men in the boxes with them,” thought Framleigh. But, mind you, he would not have made such a cowardly mental comment, if he had been in a respectable frame of mind.

But little recked Polly, whether his opinions were flattering or otherwise, just or unjust. She was amusing herself and Popham, rattling on at a fine rate about this new piece of old Buxton's. She seemed quite to enjoy the thought of taking part in it. She was not a star among her fellow-artists, never had been, and never would be, though her pretty face and charming good-nature made her such a favorite; but if she was not a star, certainly she enjoyed her part of the work far more than if she had been the adored object of the people's most feverish admiration. All her parts were simple ones, calculated to show

her picturesque, innocent beauty and naïve vivacity; and even old stagers, who knew and had known from the first that Mademoiselle Pauline (see play bills) would never make a Siddons, were pleasantly impressed, and were quite enraptured with her bright way of filling her little parts and singing her artless songs. And what a favorite she was with the Montmorenci. How the good soul fell in love with her moods, and laughed at her jokes, and delighted in her triumphs; for, if her theatrical triumphs were small, Polly had triumphs of another class, not to be slighted. Was not old Buxton himself ready to marry her off hand, and make her manageress of the Prince's, at any moment? Did not that aristocratic old sinner, Lord Cairngorm, throw her bouquets, night after night, and had he not once sent her a diamond bracelet, which Miss Polly, to her credit be it spoken, had packed back to him, per bearer, with a message that ought to have extinguished him, if it did not? Did not half-a-dozen "heavy swells" congregate in the green-room, after the evening's performance

was over, just with the hope of gaining a few words with her; and had not the whole —th regiment, stationed at Banmulloch, fallen in love with her, in a body? And all this the Montmorenci confided to their visitor, in a triumphant aside, while Polly was chatting with Popham.

“An’ it’s few gurls of her age, but would have their heads turned off their shoulders wid the flattery of the men; fur, sure enough, some of them makes great fools of themselves. But, Polly, faith, it’s Polly knows how to be winnin’, an’ smooth-tongued, and light-hearted as a burd, an’ yet kape thim at arms-length.”

And so passed the time. Polly filling the soul of her young adorer with ecstasy with her good spirits; the Montmorenci rambling on in the best of humors; Framleigh professing to listen, but alternately criticising Polly, and finding himself mentally entangled by her fresh face, and radiant eyes. He was glad when Popham, after an ardent struggle, summoned up resolution to rise from his chair, to make his adieus. He was glad it was over.

But if Framleigh was not sorry to leave this

dubious field, he left it with polite dignity, at least. He bowed his straight six feet of height suavely before the placid Montmorenci, and the grisette's cap she was making; he bent low before Polly, and replied by polite equivocation to her faint hope that they might see him again; and he stood uncovered on the path before the door, while Popham lingered on the threshold.

"If you will only let me send you some roots and things, you know, Miss Pemberton," he heard Popham say, "I will go to Pruner's to-day, and pick out the best he has, and—and I shall be delighted. I should like," almost pathetically, "to see something I had given you grow in your garden, and to know you took care of it."

But, though he heard this, Framleigh had not heard what Polly had said to her friend, in the hall, when his own back was turned.

"I say, Teddy," she had observed, with the usual admixture of naiveté and slang phrase, "your friend is an awful swell, isn't it? He is a bigger swell than Cairngorm or Delaplayne, any day. Never mind bringing him again. I don't like him."

## CHAPTER II.

## MRS. POMPHREY'S "EVENING."

BUT when she said this, Polly knew nothing of that "evening" of Mrs. Pomphrey's. And, for the matter of that how could she know anything about it? She had never been called upon to assist at one of the Pomphrey "evenings" before, and accordingly did not anticipate that pleasure. But it came, nevertheless. Mrs. Pomphrey was young, Mrs. Pomphrey was fair, Mrs. Pomphrey's pet insanity was a tendency to break out into amateur theatricals. At Christmas-tide this tendency usually evinced itself most strongly, and it was at Christmas-tide that Polly found herself drawn, somehow or other, into her service. A young lady, who had promised to enact the part of a certain attractive little marquise, in a certain little comedy, had proved herself incapable, and, rather to the relief of her fellow-amateurs, it must be confessed, had thrown up her part. Mrs. Pomphrey was

in despair. Only a week left, and nobody, positively nobody, to rely upon! Did not somebody know somebody? Did not anybody know anybody? She almost tore her charmingly-dressed hair. And then, one of the more youthful amateurs, who had seen Desirée, and had, of course, been desperately enamored of that harmless young syren, ventured to speak up in her behalf.

"I—ah—think—ah—I know some one who would do," he said, making a transparent effort not to look eager. "There's—ah—a girl at old Buxton's—the Prince's, you know, who does such things well. Pemberton, her name is. Perhaps you could engage her for the part."

"Pretty Polly P.!" exclaimed a languid elderly dandy. "By Jove, yes! Let us have her, by all means. Pretty Polly P. will carry us through, without a blunder."

Mrs. Pomphrey took out her tablets and a pencil with an air of resolution.

"What is her address?" she demanded. "Where shall I find her? I will put it down now, and call on her this afternoon."



And she did call on Polly, and finding Polly at home, by dint of some seductive argument, persuaded Polly to promise to take the part.

Thus, on this eventful "evening," Polly found herself figuring upon the small elaborate stage, and appearing before the rose-colored silk curtains, to receive additional applause from an enthusiastic audience, which had fallen in love with her pretty, innocent face and lovely figure at first sight.

But it is not with this part of Mrs. Pomphrey's "evening" we have to do ; it is with what occurred after the acting was over, and people, both audience and actors, were mingling on level ground, flirting, flattering, dancing, jesting, and scandalizing. Then, I am obliged to say, Polly's occupation had gone. On the stage, the participants in the pleasures of Mrs. Pomphrey's "evening" had admired her ; but off the stage, what could they do with her ? She was not of themselves, she belonged to a different class of beings ; human beings, it is true, but still human beings with whom they had nothing quite in common. She was a very handsome young

person, they all saw. But were not handsome young persons in that grade of life often rather dubious young persons? They did not mean to be ill-natured, at least all of them did not, but was it not rather awkward for them? Perhaps this poor little raven among doves ought not to have stayed; but you see she did not know enough for this.

It was her first experience of the feminine side of high life, and she had thought it quite probable that she should enjoy the after-ball, and the fine people, and the fine supper, as much as she had enjoyed Angeliqué's supper, and the little dance they had after it.

But, alas! her eyes were soon opened. There she sat, in her picturesque stage-grandeur, of blue and silver brocade, with the powder on her hair, and the great paste buckles on her high-heeled blue and silver shoes, for they were to wear their costumes all the evening. Mrs. Pomphrey's was becoming to her, which, perhaps, was the reason. In half an hour Polly had found out, being as sharp as she was pretty, that she had nothing to do with

these grand people, and they had less to do with her. Even the gentlemen had, for the time, deserted her, somewhat against their wills, it must be admitted, but they could not help themselves. Their sisters, and mammas, and young lady-friends, had taken them in tow, and kept a sharp eye upon them—a keen, propriety-suggesting eye. “Dance with the youngest Miss McIntosh, Charles, love,” said mamma, to her eldest hope, seeing him cast a longing eye at that dangerous Polly. “Go, and rescue Clara Thorbury from that horrid Lethered,” coaxes Edward’s artful sister. And to Beverly the Dashing, who, during the performance, remarked that Polly was “stunning,” pretty little Miss Penstock says, artlessly, “What a dreadful thing it is, you know, that such a lovely creature should have to live such a horrid, demoralizing life, and lose all her freshness through paint and things. I wonder if she would look faded now, if that rouge was washed off. I have heard Francis say that they do fade and get sallow, even when they are quite young.”

Rouge indeed! The time had not come yet when Polly needed rouge. The fresh young tints of red and white would have set at defiance any "pink saucer" extant; and Miss Penstock knew this too; but at the same time there was a little consolation in suggesting that it might be rouge. And Polly sat in her finery, trying to be amused, but, at the same time, wishing herself at home; wishing she had left herself a loop-hole for early escape, instead of believing her hostess's neat, diplomatic speeches, and relying on them so far as not to order her modest cab until half-past twelve. She opened and shut her silver-flowered, blue satin fan, and looked about her, as the only way of whiling away the time.

"Swells off the stage are enough like swells on it," she said to herself. "That old woman, in velvet and point lace, reminds me of the Duchess in 'May-fair'; and I am sure the tall, fair girl she is talking to, might be Pauline Deschappelles. Yes, and there is Madame! And there are Romeo and Juliet, and that uncomfortable-looking woman, in black velvet,

might be Hamlet in disguise. And there—why, there is that friend of Teddy Popham's, and he is coming this way!"

She had not seen anything of Framleigh since that summer morning, when Popham had brought him across to her little garden; and she had not been sorry. Teddy had taken her hint, and had not brought Framleigh again; and the truth was, she had quite forgotten his very existence, until he "turned up," as she put it, in this very way. And he? Well, he had not forgotten her quite so completely, because Teddy Popham would not let him. He had heard from Teddy of her successes at the theatres, and of her charms, and of her brilliance; but he had not thought of her, on his own account. He had not even been to the Prince's to see Desirée. But he was in a better humor now than he had been when he met her first. He was in a better humor, because he was in better spirits. He was beginning to hope that he had some prospect of tiding safely over the troubles that had made him moody and unamiable then; and, as a consequence,

he was more open to impression, to being impressed pleasantly by this pretty sight of Polly, attired in blue and silver brocade, with dazzling buckles on her dainty shoes, with powder on her hair, with that carnation color on her cheeks, with that fine glow in her immense, changeable eyes. He was so pleasantly impressed, that he made up his mind to stop and speak to her. What color were those immense eyes? He thought they were a sort of warm, yellow-brown, when Polly raised them to his face, as he addressed her.

"Miss Pemberton, I believe," he said.

"Yes," answered Polly, quietly. "Miss Pemberton."

"I wish he had forgotten," she was saying to herself.

But there was no help for it. He had made up his mind to talk to her a little, and there was no preventing him, without being ruder and more ungracious than it was in Polly Pemberton's sweet-tempered nature to be toward even her worst enemy, if she had one. So she permitted him to seat himself at her side, to

open a quiet little conversation, to inquire about her flowers, to pretend to be interested in the bodily health of Montmorenci; in fact, to make himself extremely agreeable. After listening awhile, she began to be rather entertained too. He could be entertaining, if he chose, mark you, this Capt. Framleigh. His style was somewhat quiet and languid, but it was a good style, and a polished one. His low, half-confidential tone was pleasant too, and his tendency to satirize the good people about them made her laugh. Those large and rather indolent-looking blue eyes of his were a taking feature, and after her attention had been attracted by them, Polly thought them as fine as he was thinking her own chameleon orbs.

"Were you enjoying yourself, when I came in?" he asked, letting these lazy blue eyes rest upon her face.

"No," answered Polly, fearlessly. "I wasn't. I don't know any one here, and no one knows me, and what is more, no one wants to know me; and I don't like to sit still while everybody else is dancing."

"Then you are fond of dancing?"

"Yes. And I am used to it."

An idea presented itself to his mind, suddenly. He had not thought of such a thing before; in fact, he was not fond of dancing, but it just occurred to him that he would like to try the seductive waltz the musicians were beginning, with pretty Polly P. Why not? And he was in the mood to assert himself before society a little to-night. He did not pause to put his request into very ceremonious form.

"Will you dance with me?" he said, briefly.

Polly smiled.

"It will be better than sitting still," her frankness getting the better of her. "And that is a lovely waltz they are playing now. Yes, I will dance."

People stared at them when he led her out upon the floor, and put a firm, light arm about her lovely, pliant waist. Could it be possible that this was Gaston Framleigh, whose very pride and exclusiveness made him anything but a favorite? The women looked grave, and the men a trifle envious, but it was Fram-



leigh of the Guards, after all. And he was waltzing round the room with those long, easy strides, and that cool, untranslatable air, Polly floating with him as lightly as a thistle-down. Polly never noticed the grave faces ; she cared very little about the matter ; she enjoyed the music, and her partner's good time and step ; but she would just as readily have waltzed with Teddy Popham. Capt. Framleigh had not "impressed" her yet, even if she was beginning to relent toward him, and decide that, "swell" as he was, he was more agreeable than she had given him credit for at first. She had seen too many men to be susceptible.

"Do you know everybody in the room?" she asked him, as they went round.

"I know nobody," he answered. "I dare say I have met most of these people before, and I know most of their names, and nearly all of their faces ; but as to know them—— Stay, I think I see a young lady there—— But, no ! I don't know even Diana Dalrymple, and we have been on decently friendly terms for ten years."

"Which is Diana Dalrymple?" Polly asked, thinking how well the name would look on a playbill, and rather envying the girl who had been born to it.

"We will pass her in a moment or so. A tall blonde, waltzing toward us, with a man in uniform. She wears pink brocade and pearls."

When this young lady passed them, Polly cast a rapid glance over her, ran her over after the manner of women, with a swiftly-comprehending eye. A beauty, a magnificent, cold, white creature, with finely-cut, delicate face, and down-dropped eyelids, and with a great, graceful rustle of that rich and exquisite brocade following in her wake, and yet never seeming to get in her way, or trouble her in the least.

"Her name suits her," said Polly.

"I have thought so, often," he replied.

"She must have been very young, when you knew her first!" she hinted.

"Ten years old," answered the captain, his eyes following the pink brocade train, and marble-white shoulders. "She is my cousin."

They passed each other twice or thrice before they ended their waltz ; but Miss Dalrymple did not raise the down-dropped fringes of her handsome eyes. When Gaston chose, she said to herself, he was at liberty to leave his partner, and come to make his bow to herself ; but until then——

What would you have? Certainly, it could not be expected of her, that she should recognize the existence of a dubious young person, who had been brought before them for their entertainment. She could not see Gaston, without seeing Polly ; and Polly she would not see, or rather she would not observe that she was dancing with her cousin, the handsomest, the most unimpeachable man in the room. So she saw neither of them.

Polly knew all this, too. Had she not seen it at once, with those sharp eyes of hers? And yet, would you believe it? she did not pause the sooner for it, nor care very much. She was used to it, perhaps.

But at length she brought her dance to an end.

"I will sit down, if you please," she said to her partner; and so was led to her seat, and handed to it with a low bow.

She had little chance to sit again, until the cab came, however. The ice being broken, partners came in rapid succession; they quite flocked about her chair, in fact, and besieged her, despite the decorum-suggesting glances of virtuous mammas and modest daughters. Her little programme was handed about, and name after name went down, until it was full, yes, up to the last dance, which would end somewhere about half-past twelve.

"I am like Cinderella," she said in that cool, undisturbed way of hers, to Gaston Framleigh. "When the clock strikes twelve, the spell will be broken; the blue and silver will turn to sober gray; and I shall leave the glass slippers behind me. What a pity there is no prince to pick them up, and send a courier after me. If you should hear of one making inquiries, just send him to the Prince's. I shall be playing 'Madelon,' there to-morrow night; and he won't have any trouble in finding me."

She had the best of it, after all, if the just and upright matrons did gather their innocent broods about them, and look askant at her. She danced her fill, and was made much of, and when she made her modest curtesy to the audience, her exit had its *éclat*. And Gaston Framleigh, who was bending over Diana Dalrymple's chair, and talking to her, in that low, half-confidential tone, followed Polly with his glance until she was out of the room, and had passed down the hall on her escort's arm. He felt lazily attracted, and would not have been sorry to follow her in person—more for variety's sake than anything else, perhaps. There was not very much variety in Diana's high-bred repose of manner, and sometimes, just now and then—shall we confess the heresy?—he was a little bored by its suggestion of sameness.

"Is it that girl you are thinking of, Gaston?" said the young lady, not deigning to appear disturbed in her placid hauteur. "You are certainly not listening to me. But don't exert yourself to make any effort, I beg. I can wait until you are at liberty."

## CHAPTER III.

BY DEGREES.

OF course, you will be very much surprised to hear that, after this, Gaston Framleigh and pretty Polly met often enough. Else why did I introduce them to each other, and why did I bring them together at Mrs. Pomphrey's chaste entertainment? Of course, the wiseacres know very well that a writer of love-stories does not bring two people together, without some deep-laid plan in prospect. You know, at once, when Aurelia drops her fan at Mrs. Cinqmar's reception, and Augustus picks it up, and hands it to her, and their eyes meet, you know at once that I mean to carry Aurelia and Augustus through two volumes of agony, and unite them in the third. So, if you are in the habit of wasting your time upon love-stories, you know, in an instant, when, in the first chapter, Capt. Gaston Framleigh announced that he was watching a young person in a gar-

den, that the young person in question did not come into that garden without its being intended that she should suffer and sigh, laugh and be happy, for your benefit and Capt. Gaston's, before I dropped my curtain upon my little stage, and turned my footlights out.

There were half-a-dozen places where Gaston Framleigh met pretty Polly. He met her in the street, going out to do her modest shopping; he met her going to rehearsal, and coming home; he met her sometimes going to the theatre, at night, under Montmorenci's guardianship, that good soul helping her to carry her little wardrobe, and not unfrequently he saw her at her own house. He could hardly have told you how it happened that he began to find himself in the small, square parlor so often. He remembered the cause of his first few visits, it is true, but that was all. He had found himself dull and tired in his own room, on one or two occasions, and the nearness of the house opposite had suggested Polly to his wandering mind. And, after the first few times, it became a sort of habit. Popham was

quite surprised to find Framleigh there so often, and, indeed, might have been alarmed, had Polly's manner toward him not been exactly what it was. She certainly showed Framleigh no special favor. In the beginning of their acquaintance, she was not nearly so fond of him as she was of Popham himself. She treated him just as she treated Delaplayne, and Despard, and Burroughs, and a dozen others. And perhaps it was this very indifference of hers, which drew Framleigh on to some slight indiscretions. If she had valued his attentions more, his fastidiousness might have taken the alarm; but, as it was, he felt perfectly safe.

"He is not exactly a favorite of mine," said Polly to Popham. "And I don't exactly see why he comes; but he does come, and so it rests there."

"He is a queer fellow," remarked Teddy, reflecting. "But he is awfully clever, you know, Miss Polly, and all that sort of thing."

Polly, stitching busily upon a smart little piece of costuming, to be worn upon the stage,



began to carol softly the tag-end of the children's song,

"Of all the king's knights, 'tis the flower  
Always gay."

"I should like to know what is the matter with him, sometimes," she said, ending her little carol abruptly. "He is stupid enough. He looks as if he had something on his mind. He reminds me, in some of his moods, of one of those villains in tragedies, who confess to a murder in the last act, and stab themselves just before the curtain goes down."

"He is a little gloomy, now and then," acknowledged Popham.

"Well, he is a particular friend of yours," said Polly, succinctly. "So you ought to ask him why. I would."

"I think I know the reason," confessed Teddy, half reluctantly. "I won't be sure, but I think it is—money."

"Money?" echoed Polly, looking up from her stitching. "A swell, like him!"

"Ah, you see," was the reply, "that is the

trouble. If he was not a swell, he would find it easier. The fact is, he was brought up to expect money, and then thrown on his own resources without any. They have their place somewhere in Yorkshire—the Framleighs; and their branch of the family is a very poor one, but the proudest of the lot, people say—and the Framleigh pride is a proverb. Framleigh, himself, was not brought up at home. An uncle took him when he was a child—the uncle whose name they gave him, Gaston, of Gaston Court. He trained Framleigh like a prince, and intended to leave him all his money. But he was a savage, self-willed, irascible old fellow, and Framleigh's pride stirred him up against his overbearing ways; and a couple of years ago they had a final quarrel, and Framleigh's whole life was changed by it. Old Gaston will not hear his name mentioned; and Gaston Court, and all the money, are to go to a distant relative; and, altogether, Framleigh has rather a poor prospect of it."

"It is rather a poor prospect, after expecting so much," admitted Polly. "Is he in debt?"

"I am afraid so."

Polly broke into an exclamatory whistle, which would have sounded very shocking, if she had not been so very pretty, and it had not seemed so very natural.

"That is a bad look-out," she said.

Perhaps this caused her to show Framleigh a little more favor. She had more sympathy with a man in rough waters than with a man who seemed to be sailing smoothly. She knew what the rough waters were herself. She had not had an easy life. Her adopted father, old Jack Pemberton, as his friends called him, was very fond of her, and she was very fond of him, but he was a disreputable old rascal, nevertheless. Polly remembered the time when she had been both hungry and cold, when there had been no Montmorenci, and no bright, square parlor, when her amiable relative had, in the excitement of a convivial evening, forgotten to call for her at the theatre, and she had run home alone, through the wet streets, a forlorn little six-year old sprite, to find their poor rooms dark and fireless. As Montmo-

renci said, it was a wonder of wonders that the child had fought her battles so bravely, and had come to no harm. She had often met with what would have been temptation enough to a weaker and less spirited girl.

Framleigh found her easier to talk to, after his trouble had been revealed to her—though he knew nothing of Teddy Popham's confidence, and possibly might have resented it—and Polly found it easier to listen to him. When his manner did not exactly please her, she forgave him for it more readily. "If I was in his place, I should be as savage as he is," she would say; and, now and then, she even condescended to try to while away his gloom with some simple act of pleasantry, or good humor. And yet, surely, there were never two people who were less inclined to fall in love with each other at the outset.

"It is actually a sort of rest to a man to go there," said he.

"Let him come," said Polly. "He wants something to amuse him, and he does nobody any harm."

"A well-behaved, quiet young man," said the discreet Montmorenci. "An' Polly knows how to take care av herself; so why should I be raisin' objections?"

If they had been left to themselves, it is just possible that this record of mine would not have been written. But are people ever left to themselves, I ask you? Is there not always some interested or disinterested friend to open one's eyes to one's shortcomings, to one's unconscious motives, to all sorts of things, of which one might remain blissfully ignorant, but for the kindly hints of these disinterested beings?

It was Popham who first upset Polly's equilibrium; Popham, who would have readily cut off his right hand, rather than have spoken, if he had only known what a train he was applying his spark to. Let us set Teddy Popham upon a right footing. His was not a hopeful case, and he was conscious of the fact. On the contrary, it was an utterly hopeless one. His admiration for Polly was a sentiment of long standing. He had fallen madly in love with

her at an early stage of adolescence. He had fallen in love with her from the boxes, on the occasion of his first dress-coat and her first benefit, when she had played some bewitching part in the costume of a vivandiere. He had hung about the theatre for weeks, and humbly and despairingly curried the favor of supernumeraries, who were not of the slightest assistance to him, in his efforts to obtain an introduction. Pretty Polly P. had been his first youthful passion, and there the matter had ended.

When he managed to establish an acquaintance with her, he had found her simply immovable. She was not a young lady of susceptible temperament, and he merely astonished her. She was sorry for him, and that was all. If he had made love to her, for a thousand years, he could never have stirred a kindred sentiment in her good-natured, soft little heart. Polly had not an easily awakened nature, it seemed. Up to the time she met Gaston Framleigh, she had not known what love was. She had acted it, she had studied her parts in

comedies, tragedies, and farces, in which it was the point and principal; she had had lovers; she had laughed at or pitied them, liked or disliked them; but as to returning their tender passion, she could not do so, for she knew nothing of it, and none of them had been able to give her her first lesson. Some of them had even accused her of being somewhat phlegmatic. And perhaps she was, during one period—the chrysalis period—of her existence. But she had always liked Popham. He, at least, had possessed the good sense to see himself beaten; to know that the obstacle lay in himself, and not in Polly alone; and he was faithful, and sweet-natured enough to want to be her friend, when he was compelled to give up all hope of being her lover. And when the first pang was over, both faced the matter sensibly, and settled down into an honest enough Arcadian sort of friendship, tintured, of course, on Popham's side, with the fondness of the old passion, and on Polly's with the kindliness of sympathy. So, certainly, the slight blunder the young man made was an innocent

one. Framleigh, as I have said, was one of his ideals; and Polly being in his eyes the most perfect of her sex, it was natural that he should be generously interested in the welfare of both. Accordingly, he was led to commit himself.

"I met Framleigh, this morning, Polly," he ventured, on one occasion.

It was Saturday afternoon, and Polly was standing upon the hearthrug, before him, studying her part with great earnestness, and as she was not quite sure of her perfection in said task, she rather slighted this mention of Framleigh, by mixing him in with a hurried run of words.

"‘Soft! He comes! Now weakling heart be still!’ Yes, he was here. Daresay you met him just after his call. ‘How pale his cheek——’"

"He comes here very often, doesn't he?" interrupted Popham.

"Often enough," answered Polly, without looking up from her book. "'Why do I blush? Why—why this——' I say, Teddy, isn't it stuff? Where's the use in asking why? I wonder if I shall need much prompting?"



But Teddy Popham was thinking of something else, a little mournfully, perhaps. And who could blame him?"

"Framleigh's a very handsome fellow, Polly," he said.

"Yes," indifferently, from Polly. "I suppose he is."

"Don't you know he is?" suggested Teddy.

Something in his voice, perhaps the suspicion of a tremor—for unselfish as he was, how could the poor young fellow forget that there had been a past, before the cool friendly present in which he was thinking of a future for his friend—something in his voice arrested Polly's wandering attention, drew it from the yellow-covered old play-book, and made her look at him with some wonder.

"Do I know!" she echoed, and then—it seemed as if it was all in a flash—she blushed almost angrily. "What do you mean?" she demanded.

"I mean," answered Popham, quite pathetically, "that he knows you are handsome, Polly."

Handsome! And how handsome she was just at that particular moment, as she stood there, her arm dropped suddenly down by her side, her fine hand still holding her book, a slim forefinger between its pages, her tall, girl's figure looking its full, fine height in the unconscious attitude she had struck, with her head lifted, her cheeks touched with that sudden red, a little annoyed fire in her eyes.

"If you mean," she began, scornfully, and then broke off. "I don't know what you do mean," she said.

"I wonder at that," said Teddy. "You, who are so used to seeing men fall in love with you."

"In love!" cried Polly. "Bah!" And she shrugged her shoulders.

"That means," said Teddy, "that love is not your style, and I know it hasn't been, so far; but it must come some day or other, Polly, to you, just as it has come to the rest of us, and somehow it has seemed to me that Framleigh——"

"Teddy," said Polly, recovering herself, and

speaking quite good-naturedly. "Framleigh is not the man." And yet, the next instant, the great pupil of her eye dilated, as if with a feeling of quick fright, and she laughed, nervously.

"I never thought of him," she said. "Why, it's a joke, Teddy. No end of a joke, to think of—of such a thing!"

## CHAPTER IV.

## DIANA DALRYMPLE.

THAT very day, in a much more imposing room, and in a much more respectable and desirable quarter, Framleigh was receiving his touch of the spur.

Diana Dalrymple was pouring out a cup of tea for him, and he was waiting at her side, by the little marble-topped table, to receive it from her hands. It was a habit, at the house of Dalrymple, to indulge in this harmless, informal, afternoon tea. Diana liked it, and Diana was the controlling power. In the first place, Diana liked to preside at the small table, upon which the rich, chaste service was placed. It was a graceful position. She had faultless hands and arms, and was conscious of looking like a goddess dispensing nectar; and, secondly, people dropping in to make a friendly call, gentlemen visitors. for instance, seemed to warm and become genial under the influence

of the steaming ambrosia dealt out to them by this stately Hebe. Gaston partook of this mild refreshment twice a week, at least, from a sense of duty. He could not have said why he felt it a duty, however, though, perhaps, some shrewd character-readers might have hit upon the wherefore.

It was an understood thing among the family, and, indeed, in the outer world, also, that Capt. Framleigh would, some time or other, stand revealed in the character of suitor for the fair Dalrymple's hand. This was one of the articles of the Dalrymple belief, and had been for years—in fact ever since the owner of Gaston Court had announced, with his usual delicacy, that the prospect of such an alliance would not be unpleasant to him. The owner of Gaston Court, Mr. Eustace Gaston, admired Diana. He had a weakness for fine women, and Diana was of the style generally designated by connoisseurs as a fine woman. So he had promptly issued an amiable mandate to the effect that his future heir might consider himself expected to marry her, the

sooner the better; and the consequence was an uncomfortable sort of an entanglement for Gaston, an entanglement which was by no means an engagement, and yet was an entanglement notwithstanding, even now, when he was the future heir no longer. He could not quarrel with Diana, merely because he had quarreled with his uncle; and certainly Diana did not intend to quarrel with him. Sooth to say, the young lady knew better. Women have so much influence over men, you know, so great an influence for good. A man's wife will often be the means of healing a little family wound which would otherwise never have healed, and which would have rankled on to the end, and carried very handsome fortunes into altogether unworthy and insignificant branches of relationship. Not that the handsome Dalrymple, and her equally handsome mother were too far-seeing, or inclined to be anything but most touchingly disinterested. Nothing of the kind. But ought they to desert this young man because he was unfortunate? Should they forget the sacred ties of relationship, because he had

been hasty, and a trifle ill-advised? Never! never! All the greater need, indeed, that they should endeavor to lead him again into the path of duty. In consequence of all which tender feeling Gaston found himself, somehow or other, oftener with his fair cousin than he intended to be; found that Diana's mother expected him, and was inclined to reproach him with neglect, if he did not drop in every day or so, and take this friendly afternoon tea with them; found it hard to obtain leave of absence, if the truth were told, and yet scarcely understood how he was influenced, and almost wished sometimes, with the base ingratitude of his sex, that they would leave him alone.

Thus behold him, standing upon the hearth-rug, holding one of the egg-shell cups, and trying not to appear otherwise than politely indifferent to the somewhat heavy jocosities of that delightful young adorer of Diana's, the Honorable John Redmayne, known more commonly among his less fervent admirers as "that little idiot, Jack Redmayne." He looks at Jack, from under his brows, and it is well that

his heavy mustache conceals his unamiable sneer. He is never partial to Jack, but is to-day specially irritated by him. It annoys him to see Diana smile that well-bred smile of hers at his wit and water, which, it must be admitted, is more water than wit; and when he hears the maternal Dalrymple laugh sweetly and encouragingly, he could find it within his heart to wring that excellent woman's neck. Perhaps Jack Redmayne sees this, for he turns upon him, and, figuratively speaking, rends him.

"Framleigh's dull to-day," he says. "What's the matter, Framleigh? 'Pon my soul, you are not the same fellow since the opera-dancing episode—pretty Polly P., you know, and all that sort of thing."

He laughs with his usual inspiring cheerfulness, as he speaks—a cheerfulness which, by the way, inspires Framleigh with an almost uncontrollable desire to fall upon him, and take him by his neat little collar, and forcibly eject him from the room by way of the window.

The maternal Dalrymple pricks up her ears.

"What is that?" she says. "What is this



about opera-dancing episodes and pretty Pollys? It is surely not of Gaston you are speaking, Mr. Redmayne. Oh, what a couple of naughty boys!" And she shakes her old forefinger sportively.

"'Pon honor! it is, though," declares the much-to-be-admired Jack. "'Pon honor, Mrs. Dalrymple; I declare to you all our fellows are talking about it; how he has fallen in love with a little girl at the Prince's, and goes to see her, and her old Irish duenna, and her disreputable old uncle every day. As bad a case of spoons, you know, as you ever met with. Now, Framleigh, do the straightforward thing, and own to the soft impeachment. We won't mention names, but pretty Polly P., you know!"

Gaston's stare at him almost became a glare. How he would like to strangle him! But he controls the glare, until he forces it back into a stare, indulged in over the edge of the egg-shell cup.

"Your anxiety for information has led you rather astray," he says, with a ghost of a sneer. But the next instant he meets Diana's eye, and

quails, though he is furious with himself for so quailing. Why should he quail? Why should he not have a tranquil sort of friendship for a girl beneath him in the social sphere? Of course, he acknowledges that Polly is beneath him. He knows she is, and never loses the consciousness of the fact, when he is away from her, though, sometimes, just rarely, he forgets it in her presence. Is the poor girl to blame for being born into the tawdry, disreputable life? He calls it tawdry and disreputable, you see, which Teddy Popham never did.

Diana, with a white, long-fingered hand upon the tea-pot, pauses in concocting Redmayne's third cup of tea, to speak with placid significance.

"Is it the young woman who acted so charmingly at Mrs. Pomphrey's entertainment, Gaston?" she says. "I think I heard several young men call her 'Polly.' And I remember you danced with her. Do you know her, Mr. Redmayne, and do you call her 'Polly' too?"

Redmayne affects confusion.

"Too bad that, Miss Dalrymple, 'pon

honor," he says. "You know a fellow don't like to——"

But he is interrupted, and it is Mr. Framleigh who interrupts him, with such suddenly acquired, but withal remarkable expression, in the usually indolent blue eyes Polly has admired, that he falls back a space actually, as that gentleman put his egg-shell cup in his egg-shell saucer.

"Do you know her, and do you call her Polly?" he demands of him, with a touch of fine sarcasm. "Pray tell us, Redmayne."

And then, strange to say, it is Diana who quails before him, though he has not given her a glance; and Mrs. Dalrymple sees it with that sharp, maternal eye of hers, and hastens to the rescue. Some undercurrent of satiric power in their relative has a habit of making itself felt by these two women, and then it is always their turn to eat a little diplomatic humble pie.

"Gaston," she says, "I am astonished! Mr. Redmayne, you surprise me! You dreadful creatures! Pray—pray change the subject.

We really do not care to hear anything more about it. We don't believe it, you know ; and it is such horrid nonsense. Mr. Redmayne, go and get that cup of yours, I command you ! Diana, my love, more tea for your cousin."

And though Jack Redmayne is puzzled, and would like to improve the occasion with some of his original and brilliant corruscations, he finds that the subject drops, in spite of his efforts.

But Framleigh had received his touch of the spur, just as Polly had received hers. When he walked home, through the fog, buttoned up to the throat in his great-coat, the sharpness of his step arose not so much from a desire to keep himself warm, as from inward irritation. What on earth did this fellow mean? Was it possible that he had visited the girl so often that people were beginning to notice it? Was it possible that they thought it possible that he, Gaston Framleigh, could have any serious motive in view, in connection with a girl of such a class? He flushed hotly at the very thought of it. He had heard of men doing such mad things. There had been men of

such infamous ill taste that they had so far forgotten themselves; but, good heavens! he had never dreamed of such a thing. He had been the very first to condemn and sneer at such men. He must eschew the great enjoyment of the square parlor. He must keep out of the girl's way for the future. And then, all at once, there arose before him various visions of Polly, as he had seen her at various times when he had been conscious of finding her quite worthy of admiration. There was Polly, singing one of her theatre songs to the accompaniment of the jingling old piano, and, somehow or other, managing to sing it remarkably well; there was Polly, sewing at a theatrical little Normandy cap, and becoming so much interested in her simple task, that she had a brilliant color, and looked actually exquisite; there was Polly, standing upon the hearth-rug, with her hands clasped behind her back like a child's, as she rattled over her part with Montmorenci or Teddy Popham holding the book. Polly was a beautiful creature, you know, and could do nothing without becoming

transcendently lovely ; and it was enough to make any man sigh, to think of throwing away the chance of seeing and admiring her. Gaston Framleigh sighed — sighed, and fretted, and fumed angrily. The idea of being in love with the girl was absurd ; but he did not like the thought of giving her up entirely.

He was going along, fretting and fuming so, when he was aroused from his moody reverie, by a sudden glare of light. How, I should like to know, was it that he had chanced to take that wrong turning in the fog, and had brought himself up right at the threshold of the Prince's, and its glare of gaslights? He took out his watch, and looked at it. It was just about time for the performance to commence. Should he go in and see what was going on? Who was this hurrying up to the side-door? Evidently one of the company, who had found herself late, and was in haste. An older woman was with her, and could hardly keep pace with her impatience. He thought he knew the tall, royal young figure. They came up in a moment, and the flare of gas fell full upon

the girl's face, and she looked up at him—looked up with a start, strange to say—a disconcerted, half-annoyed start, and then gave him a curt little nod.

“Good evening,” she said, and passed by him, without another word or glance, as if she was glad to escape saying anything more.

It was Polly, who was not playing until the after-piece, and who was a little late. But it was not because she was a little late, that she had so cut short her friend's greeting; and Framleigh, through some instinct, was quite conscious that it was not.

“Has some one been meddling with her too?” he said. “It looks like it.” And he bit his mustached lip quite fiercely. “I will go in and see her act,” he said. “I have never seen her act yet. I should like to know what has vexed her.”

And, in five minutes, he was sitting in the theatre, glowering over five hundred heads at the green curtain.

## CHAPTER V.

## DESPITE.

IT was the worst thing he could have done, of course, as we all know. If he meant to keep out of danger, he should have turned away from that flare of gaslights at the Prince's ; he should have gone home, and given his mind to the study of military tactics ; he should have done several things he left undone, and he should have left undone the one thing he did. But he gave way to that sudden impulse, and went into the theatre, and sat watching the stage, and the actors, until all was over, and Polly had sung her last song, and made her last bow, and the curtain had fallen.

When this was over, and he found himself out in the open air again, among the thronging people and carriages, he was touched with a new feeling. If he had been excited before, now he was still more excited.

"How bright and novel she made it," he said



to himself. "And how lovely she seemed, her self. Those little, simple songs of hers had quite a heart-thrill in them. No wonder she is such a favorite. I had no idea she possessed any such strength as this artless power."

The next morning, Polly, sitting in her easy chair, before the fire, heard footsteps crushing the gravel on the narrow path, and, turning to look, saw in her visitor something to make her knit her pretty black eyebrows.

"He has come to ask what has vexed me, has he?" she soliloquized. "Ah, very well. Let him come. The sooner it is over, the better for us both."

She might have been determined to force him into asking his question at once, for she met him almost freezingly at the outset, barely offering him the tips of her fingers when he came in, and then seating herself again, still holding in her hand the book she had been reading, though she half closed it.

"I was among your audience, last night," he said, abruptly, and at once.

"I did not see you," she answered. "I never do see my audience."

"But you saw me as you went in?" His vexation at her indifference showing itself in his face.

"Yes," laconically. "Of course."

Then, naturally, her coldness had its effect, and moved him, as she had known it would. He was nettled beyond calm endurance.

"May I venture to suggest, that it appeared to my mind that you were anything but glad to have seen me, just at that particular time?"

She hesitated just one moment, slightly knitting her black brows still, and regarding the edges of her book as if she was doing so with a view to steady her mind, and fix it firmly upon the subject; and then she made her answer, which, it must be acknowledged, startled him.

"If you were to suggest such a thing," she said, "I should not say you were wrong. If I were to speak the truth, I should say you were right. I was not glad to see you. And—and, I cannot honestly say, I am glad to see you now. There!" And she lifted her eyes to his

face suddenly, and looked at him as if she was glad it was over.

He rose at once, and stood before her, hat in hand; and his air was a rather surprised and lofty one.

"I am very unfortunate—" he began.

All at once he was stopped. The book was shut up and tossed on to the table, and it was Polly who interrupted him, by rising far more suddenly than he had done, and by standing up before him, looking as lovely in her impatience as it is easily possible for a young woman to look.

"You are not unfortunate," she said. It is fortunate for you that I will tell you so. You have no right to come here, and— Why, you ought to know it is not a good thing for you. Why do you come? It is not with you as it is with Teddy Popham. You are not like Teddy, who can't be harmed by it."

"Harmed," he repeated, after her, quite taken aback. "I don't understand you at all."

"I will make you understand, then," a little defiant coolness in her manner. "Not being

anybody but 'Pretty Polly P.,' I have no need to be ceremonious about things. Do you know what people have begun to say of you, already? They have begun to say that you are falling in love with me."

He was guilty of a faint start, and, at sight of it, Polly's lips curled. She even went so far as to make him a little stage-curtesy.

"There is scarcely need for such alarm as that," she said. "I do not believe the report."

"You do not understand me," he protested.

"Yes, I do," said Polly. "I suppose it is natural. It sounds awful to you; and, I dare say, if I had been born what we theatre-people call 'a swell,' it would sound just as awful to me. As it is, you know I care very little about it. I have heard such things too often to think about them at all, when I hear them now. But with you it is different. I have heard, quite by accident" (young hypocrite), "about that uncle of yours. What do you suppose your chances would be worth, if Mr. Gaston heard that you were spending your mornings with me, in-

stead of—instead of with Miss Diana Dalrymple?" making a dash at this artful finale.

He was positively pale with annoyance and surprise at this curiously new turn affairs were taking. A few hours ago, he had been resolving that he would avoid the girl, and here, after he had found it impossible to keep his resolution unbroken, was she nonchalantly telling him unpleasant truths, and almost showing him the door. If he had ever been vain and shallow enough to fancy that she was not totally indifferent to him, he would have been undeceived now, at least.

"Am I to understand from this," he said, frigidly, "Am I to understand from this, that you would prefer that my unfortunate call upon you, this morning, should be my last?"

"I think it would be best so," returned Polly, calmly.

He bowed very low, indeed.

"I may admire your frankness, at least," he said, "and thank you for it." It was the fashion of the man, that his pride was so deeply stung, that he could feel little else but the sting.

"Permit me to wish you good morning," he added.

Polly arched the black brows a little, but she held out her hand.

"Let us shake hands, as a token that there is no malice between us," she said. "It is a way we have at the theatre. Good morning."

And so it was, that Capt. Framleigh found the tables turned against him, and walked away, looking very lofty, but feeling very bitter, and not a trifle humiliated.

When he was gone, Polly rested her elbow on the mantel, and looked at herself in the small pier-glass, at the fine black brows, at the immense black-gray eyes, at each and every charm that made her what she was—one of the loveliest women of her day. She curled her pretty short upper-lip, and frowned, and then broke into a little apostrophe of herself.

"He was too much of a 'swell' to fall in love with you, Polly, my dear!" she said, "even if you are a beauty. Men of his kind don't do it, or, at least, don't do it honestly. Stick to your jackdaw's feathers, Polly P., and

don't let yourself dream—even dream—of peacock's plumes. It was not of you he thought, for a minute ; it was of himself. It does not matter whether it vexes you to be talked about or not. You are not a fine lady, my dear !”

It is not exactly correct to say of women (as it is the fashion to say) that they are forgiving. As a rule, they do not forgive injuries either real or fancied, with the readiness which is accredited them. They may mean to forgive, they may try to forgive, and, certainly, many of them do both ; but they do not find it easy, with all their efforts. With women a wrong rankles, an injury wounds, and though there may be an apparently ready surface-healing, the flesh still throbs often under the smooth-looking skin, and there are even times when it throbs on to the end. And as this is the case with many, so it was the case with Polly. She had received a sting, and it would be some time before she forgot it. Instinct had told her, from the first, that this friend of Teddy's did not regard her as Teddy did. He might admire her, as a

score of other men did, but he did not admire her generously; he admired her against his own will, and his fastidiousness protested against his unwilling admiration. Teddy Popham would have been proud to make her his wife, and present her as such to his most patrician friends. Gaston Framleigh would have shrunk intuitively from the mere thought of such a thing. She knew that well enough, and though she would have scouted the idea of love from her mind indignantly, and with high spirit, the knowledge burned her sorely. Perhaps, among all her virtues, her good-nature and unselfishness, the feminine inability to forget stood forward as Polly's greatest fault. She was neither resentful nor malicious; but she did not find it as easy to forgive, as even the generality of women find it.

What right had he to come and force an acquaintance upon her, if he could not admire her in as unbiased a manner as he would admire that cold, white woman at Mrs. Pomphrey's, Diana Dalrymple? She had not wanted him, or asked him to come, and he had



come in spite of her. And then, as it was a fashion of hers to measure a great many people by Teddy Popham, she measured by the Teddy Popham's standard that last interview. If she had spoken so to Teddy ; if at the beginning of their acquaintance she had told him that people were saying that he was in love with her, and that he must give her up because it was harming him, because his worldly interests and reputation would suffer, would he have admitted, by hesitant silence, that the thought had entered his mind, perhaps, before it had entered her own? Would he have shown no other feeling, than a lofty annoyance, at being so cavalierly treated by a girl he felt to be his social inferior? Would Teddy have thought of no one but himself, and his own superb indignation? Oh, how she smarted, this pretty Polly! How she remembered it for weeks and months after, and smarted afresh every time the memory crossed her mind!

"Your friend is not coming any more," she said to Teddy. And when Teddy, in amazement, asked her why he was not coming, she

coolly answered that it was because she had told him that she would rather he would stay away.

But though Polly did not forget, it was Framleigh who nursed actual resentment for the longer time. Here was a new experience for him, and one so utterly unexpected, that it appeared all the more unpleasant. For a few days he was furious, and then he cooled down into a sort of frigid anger against the girl. But, as you will remember, he lived within sight of the small house, and from the windows of his rooms he had full view of all that went on. At night, when Montmorenci lighted the gas, in the few minutes that intervened between its lighting and the closing of the shutter, he could see into the tiny parlor quite plainly; and shall I disclose that he somehow or other contracted a habit of waiting for this gaslighting, and took advantage of it by standing gloomily behind his own window-curtains, looking across? Angry as he was, it was queer how the mere sight of Polly still attracted him. After this change in the state of affairs, he was gloomy indeed. In

truth he had reason to be gloomy. The clouds he had at one time fancied lighter, began again to thicken around him. The time had come now when he was obliged to bear the consequences of old indiscretions. When he had quarreled with his uncle, his high-handed pride had been his ruin. He had not realized, until it was too late, that the estrangement would be a lasting one, and that Capt. Framleigh, of the —th, who must live upon his pay, was a different individual from Framleigh of Gaston Court, the future heir to his relative's thousands. There had been so many luxuries and fastidious extravagances to which he had been accustomed all his life, that pride would not allow him to forego them at the outset; and there had been past follies to pay for, and, of course, the end of it all was this, that, in these days, having been forced to give up all hope that his prospects would alter, he must bear the accumulated burden of debt and humiliation in self-reproach and despair. What a fool he had been! How he cursed the weak pride, which had led him on, when he might have paused,

and spared himself some weight, at least. He was obliged to forego his indulgences now. Why had he not been wise enough to see what must inevitably come, and face the worst at once. The world understood well enough why he had given up his elegant chambers, his cab, with its small attendant "tiger," and even his valet himself, and leaving his fashionable quarters, had taken up his abode in the modest apartments, facing the suburban residence of "old Jack Pemberton" and his charming niece. He might have spared himself unutterable pangs of after misery, if he had thrown up the game at first, and acknowledged himself beaten. He was a person of importance no longer, in society, though it must be said that he coolly displayed indifference to public opinion, and the hauteur of his air held people as much in awe of him as ever. He had never been a man with many friends, but his reserve and cold manner had prevented his making actual enemies. Even the most officiously malicious had never approached him near enough to do more than dislike him. And thus, though he fancied

his fall had been great, this was scarcely the case. However greatly his outward circumstances had altered, he was not likely to meet with either slights or patronage, as much more popular men have done, after meeting with reverses. But he had his stings, nevertheless, and sharp enough they were at times.

From her parlor window, when she sat at work during this winter, Polly often saw divers shabby men go up to the door of the house opposite, and, in course of time, she began to notice them particularly. They were not always shabby men, to be sure; but there was always a certain air about them Polly never failed to recognize; and when they were not shabby, they were flashy, and over-dressed, and greatly prone to heavy, suspicious-looking jewelry. This shrewd young person knew something of this class of society by experience, and she knew the meaning of those sometimes prolonged, and often impatient, parleys at the door, which ended now by the caller being admitted and shown up stairs to the captain's room, and now by his being dismissed in evident disgust.

"They are duns," she said, sagely. "It is plain enough to see that. Teddy said he thought he was in debt. He may well look savage and moody. I wonder if they are very uncivil. Some of them look as if they were. That horsey-looking man, in the big coat, for instance."

Uncivil! She should have heard them sometimes. They nearly drove Framleigh mad, upon occasions, with their brutal impatience and coarse familiarity. The man Polly had picked out so cleverly, the horsey-man in the big coat, haunted him like a nightmare.

"You are a nice lot, you nobs, you are!" said this individual. "A-taking the bread out of a pore man's mouth, and a-helping to starve his children. You are a nice lot, you are, with your kerridges and hosses, and driving to the devil, and no one never seeing the color of your money. Who's going to pay me for that flash turn-out of yours, I'd like to know. I'm a honest man as earns my living by the sweat o' my brow, and I'm not going to be cheated out o' my money by no man."

After such scenes as this, Teddy Popham often came in, to find his friend sitting over an untasted meal, looking white and haggard.

"I shall go mad some of these days, my fine fellow," he would burst forth, bitterly. "Those fiends will drive me out of my senses. I can't stand it much longer. I have had a couple of them here this morning, and they have managed to spoil my breakfast for me, pretty effectually. I can't eat a mouthful, and never tasted dinner yesterday."

Teddy himself would willingly have proffered his worldly possessions, but as yet Teddy's possessions were not unlimited.

"If my great aunt Bellingham would die, and I came into her property, as I expect to, we could make it all right, Framleigh," he would say. "And it would be the happiest day of my life. But I have just heard from Gloucestershire that the old lady is stronger than ever. I shouldn't be surprised if she lived to be a hundred."

"You are very kind, Popham," his friend would groan. "But though you would be the

more agreeable creditor, it would almost amount to the same thing, in the end. I should owe you the money, instead of owing to half a dozen vulgar scoundrels, who think it a fine thing to be able to badger and bully a gentleman."

Misfortune will invariably effect a change of one kind or another in the man who confronts it, and these misfortunes of his wrought a curious change in Gaston Framleigh. For the first few months, he had stood up against them with a lofty pride ; but constant dropping wore away the stone at last, and he became conscious that his strength was failing him in a manner he had not anticipated ! A certain sense of desolation began to stir within him unpleasantly.

He found himself half envying Teddy Popham his simple popularity. He even found himself wishing, with languid irritation, that he did not stand so utterly alone in the world, that he had possessed some ties of family or kindred to turn to. But of his own relatives he knew but little. His visits to the home of



his mother and sisters had always been brief and constrained. As Teddy Popham had said, the family pride was a proverb, and certainly they were not an affectionate household. The family pride had isolated them from the world, and congealed them, as it were. Gaston's prospects pleased them, in a manner. They were reservedly proud of his good fortune, of his physical beauty, of his "*grand seigneur*" air, but beyond that it was not their way to go, and decidedly, he himself was never effusive.

But this winter he altered his opinion of this matter of effusiveness, and it was Polly who changed his mind for him. Here, across the way, was that rascally, disreputable disciple of Bohemia, old Jack Pemberton, going in and coming out, blatant, bombastic, and good-natured, and it was glaringly patent, that, despite his weaknesses, Polly loved him, positively loved the old sharper. She would meet him at the door, when he came in, as if his coming was an event to be rejoiced over; she would kiss him when he took his departure, and coquet about him, brushing him down, and

smartening him up, and performing divers necessary and unnecessary small offices, after the manner of all affectionate women ; she would take his arm, and go to church with him on Sunday evenings, with a touch of pride in her air; she would bestow upon him button-hole bouquets, from her window-garden, and she would laugh at his most thread-bare jokes, as though they had been fairly scintillant with wit. There was no limit to her pretty, kindly affection for the old humbug, and it was constantly before Framleigh's eyes, alternately stinging, softening, and irritating him. If one of his sisters, Cicely, for instance, who was younger, and more easily moved than Hildegarde, if Cicely had shared his exile this winter, how much brighter she might have made it—that is, if all women were alike, and all had these lovable ways.

He knew little or nothing of women in their domestic life, but he could not easily imagine Diana Dalrymple making herself charming over such trifles as button-hole bouquets, and window-gardens. During his brief visits to his

mother's bare, yet distinguished household, he had always found himself something more attracted by Cicely than her eldest sister. Hildegard was a true Framleigh. Cicely was a trifle less decided and majestic, less cold and more girlish, and now and then he had fancied was rendered somewhat timid by the barren state around her. It was Polly who brought Cicely to his mind, and it was the sight of Polly's simple beguilements which suggested to him a new idea. Long ago he had heard Cicely wish to see London, and it had not occurred to him, in those days of his prosperity, that it was within his power to gratify her wish. But now, what if he should make up his mind to ask her to come, for a few weeks, at least? His rooms were well furnished, and his landlady a quiet and reliable person. It would make very little difference in his expenses, so little, that it was not worth the while to deny himself; and if he was not quite sure that it would be a success, at least they might try the plan. If Cicely did not find it agreeable, he could send her back to Yorkshire when she was

tired, and she would have seen London, and enjoyed a temporary absence from "Bareacres," as satirical people were fond of calling the impoverished Yorkshire estate.

## CHAPTER VI.

## CICELY.

SO, at last, he made up his mind, and wrote to Cicely and his mother, preferring his request, and in a few days came a slim, sweet-scented note of reply, and it was Cicely herself who had been allowed to write it.

"Dear Gaston did not know how surprised and grateful she was," she said. "She had wanted so much to see London. He must please to accept many thanks. Mamma was kind enough to say she might come. So, if he pleased, she would be with him on Saturday." And then, after a few more timid and half-restrained expressions of gratitude, and a stately message of sisterly affection from Hilde, she remained his "obliged Cicely."

He looked round his parlor, after reading the letter, and then rang for his landlady.

"I am expecting a visit from my sister," he said, when the good woman came, "and should

like you to make suitable preparations for her comfort. If there should be anything lacking, that a young lady will require, I shall be obliged to you if you will let me know."

He had but vague ideas of feminine requirements, and though, from the wreck of his former grandeur, he had preserved relics enough to give his apartments a certain air of elegance, he was by no means certain that they would suit a feminine taste.

"They are certainly brighter and more attractive than the parlors at 'Bareacres,'" he said, with a dreary smile, as he gave his second glance of inspection. "And Cicely understands all about my changed fortunes."

He really was almost eager for the girl's arrival, and yet he was conscious that, on both sides, there would be some slight embarrassment attendant upon their meeting. It was such an unusual thing for him to have done, and had been, he knew, so utterly unexpected by all parties.

Through some oversight, Cicely had not told him at what time she would arrive, and, accord-

ingly, as was most natural, he hit upon the wrong hour, and missed her.

It was Saturday evening when she came, and he having been down to the station, returned to the house, and found her there awaiting him.

She was standing before the fire when he entered the room, and, hearing the door open, she turned to confront him with something of trepidation manifest in her greeting.

"I am very sorry, Gaston," she said, extending a timid hand to him. "You have been to Euston Square to meet me, have you not? It was very careless to forget to tell you when the train would arrive."

He took her hand, and, bending down, kissed her cheek, and though there was perhaps more courteousness than actual affection in the caress, there was still a touch of warmth in it that he was not prone to exhibit.

"Don't speak of it," he said. "I am glad to see you, Cicely. It was very kind of you to come."

He drew a chair up for her, but remained

standing himself, feeling a little at a loss. He did not know exactly what to say in his novel position ; and Cicely herself sat looking at the fire, with a bit of additional color, and a slight air of embarrassment.

“It was very kind of you to come,” he repeated. “I have not very much to offer you, and, to be honest, perhaps it was selfish to ask you, now, when I have so little, but—but, I really felt the need of some companionship, and I remembered that you had said, long ago, that you wished to see London.”

Cicely looked up at him, her girl's face both surprised and touched. Could it be possible that he, Gaston, whom they had all so admired, could have felt so lonely that he could even wish to see her? He spoke of having little to offer, but the room she sat in, and the ones Mrs. Batty had shown to her, did not look as if he could be so very poor. Perhaps it was just the contrast to the old hopeful, luxurious life, that made him feel things so much.

“Ah, Gaston,” she said, glancing round at the pretty apartment, and flushing quite brightly,



"you never lived at the Grange, you know. If you had, you would think such a pretty room as this was an actual little paradise. Just think of that bare, mournful, immense Grange parlor; one's voice used to sound actually hollow in it. I like this so much better, and I am sure I shall enjoy being with you, so much."

He looked so pleased that she was quite reassured. She had come there, feeling no slight awe of him, and wondering how he would receive her, and how she would be able to entertain him at all. She had felt a great fear of boring him with her insignificance. But now her spirits began to be on the ascendant. If he was low-spirited and dull, perhaps she could amuse him, after all, and he would not find her so stupid. And, on his part, he found that her mere presence had done him good. She was a pretty girl, tall and willowy in figure, and with all the Framleigh characteristics of delicate regularity of features, graceful air, and noticeable carriage, this last softened greatly, however, by her extreme girlishness and that touch of timidity. He could not help observing this

timidity, and observing, too, that it had increased, instead of decreased, since he had last seen her. It was manifest, even in her movements, and showed itself, not only in a certain hesitance to express her opinions, but in the very look of her fawn-like eyes. They were absolutely "fawn-like," those brown eyes of hers, her brother told himself, though he was by no means the sort of man to indulge in high-flown comparisons. It was quite astonishing how he felt himself warm toward the girl, and how he unbent, in spite of himself. Gradually he discovered that he was making confidences, actually talking to her about the state of his affairs, and the result of his changed fortunes. He had meant to hide from her all that he could, but the innocent pleasure, and almost grateful interest she displayed in his simplest speeches, led him on.

Tea, too, with Cicely at the head of the table, was such a different meal from what he was accustomed to finding it. Seeing him so gracious, the girl brightened, and found courage. Her guileless, unworldly chatter amused him,

somehow or other, and changed the current of his usually listless thought. It was a simple, unpretending sauce enough, but its flavor had a fresh piquancy of its own. And then, when tea was over, she was encouraged to explore a little, to move here and there, about the room, admiring his possessions, looking at his pictures, and turning over his books, so evidently exhilarated by her freedom, and so easily pleased, that she was really a new sensation.

When she came to his side, to bid him good-night, before going to her room, he held her hand lightly, for a moment.

"And you think you can amuse yourself for a few weeks, Cicely?" he said, feeling almost eager to hear her reply.

"I think I shall be sorry when the time comes for me to go back," she said. "You—Oh! you don't know how dreary it is there, Gaston," in a pretty desperation. "If you wanted me, and—and mamma would not object, I am sure I should like to stay here always."

"Really?" he asked, "really, Cicely?"

"Really—indeed!" she answered.

"Thank you," he said. "It is very good of you." And he released her hand with a positive feeling of relief. It would have stung him, even more than he was aware of, if she had seemed a thought less warm, or a shade less in earnest, than she so plainly was.

So she was domiciled with him, and fell into her place so readily, and seemed to enjoy it so much, that it was not long before he began to wonder how he had managed to exist without her loving companionship. The majority of women must be very much alike in their homes, he fancied, for she had just the charming way he had observed in Polly herself. She touched up his room, and gave it a certain air; she evidently greeted his incomings with delight, and she deplored his absence. He found buttons on his gloves, feminine works of art on his toilet-table, and elegant, inexpensive novelties in his parlor. Altogether, he was a happier man than he had been for months.

But judge of Teddy Popham's surprise, when, not having chanced to see his friend for

a week, and, consequently, not having heard of the change in the programme, he made an unceremonious entrée into the bachelor's parlor, one night, and found himself face to face with a tall, beautiful young creature, who rose and stood before him, blushing, but still retaining that Framleigh air of graceful state and ceremony.

"I—I beg pardon, I am sure!" stammered the young man, blushing himself most brilliantly. "I really was not aware that Framleigh——" And his pause fully expressed the height and depth of his honest confusion.

"I am Capt. Framleigh's sister," said Cicely, with ready tact. "I think you must be his friend, Mr. Popham. I have heard Gaston speak of you, often, Mr. Popham. Pray be seated. I am glad to see you."

Teddy was quite overwhelmed by her beauty and pretty dignity. Being an admirer of the Framleigh air in his friend, he found it indescribably charming in this fair creature, who seemed so unconscious of its existence in herself.

"I am waiting for Gaston now," she said. "We take tea at this time when we do not dine late. He will be pleased to find you here, I am sure."

Teddy thanked her, almost gratefully, and so evidently appreciated her efforts to set him at ease, that, in a very few minutes, Cicely began to find herself playing her part of hostess with marvelous aptitude. He was Gaston's friend, and fond of Gaston, she discovered. So, of course, it was quite correct to endeavor to entertain him. And Teddy was readily entertained. It would have been almost entertainment enough, to have merely looked at and admired her, as she sat opposite to him, with her fair, idle hands folded lightly on her knee, her slender body leaning a trifle forward, her face turned toward him.

When Framleigh made his appearance, he found the two quite enjoying themselves. Cicely's low, sweet laugh greeted him, at the head of the staircase, and when he entered the room, she was looking even prettier than usual.

"I am glad you have come at last, Gaston," she said. "Mr. Popham must be quite tired of me; he has been here half an hour!"

And then Teddy found himself beguiled into remaining to take tea with them. Exhilarated by Cicely's presence at the head of the table, he so enjoyed himself, that he became quite brilliant. It was almost like passing an evening in the square parlor across the way, even though there was such a wide difference between the types of the two girls. And thinking of this, he could not help wondering what they would think of each other—how Polly would like this lovely, simple, stately young creature, and how Cicely would comport herself, if she should chance to meet with Polly.

"She is the loveliest little thing," he said to Polly, the very next day, in describing his experience. "The loveliest little thing. Or, stay! I should not say that, for she is anything but little. Fact is, I believe she is nearly as tall as you are, Polly. But she is the sort of girl one feels inclined to apply

diminutives to, in spite of a certain stately air she has, which reminds one of Framleigh. You should see how she carries her little head, by Jupiter! It is set on her charming throat, like a lily on its stem. And even while she looks at you with her innocent eyes in that soft, girlish sort of way, you feel a trifle awed by the unconscious, regal curve of the little slender neck. You just ought to see her, Polly."

"She must be worth looking at," returned Polly. "Only I think I should like her better if she was less like Framleigh."

"Well, you see," Teddy answered, "I am fond of Framleigh, and you are not."

It was queer enough, that, the very evening after this conversation took place, Framleigh came into his parlor, and found Cicely standing behind the curtains, intently watching the window of the house opposite.

"Oh, Gaston!" she exclaimed, the moment she caught sight of him. "Do come and look at this pretty girl. I have been watching her all the evening. They have such a bright fire in the room, that I can see her quite distinctly.



I never saw such a handsome creature in my life. Isn't it just like a picture?"

Framleigh went to the window, and looked across. It was like a picture. The firelight filled the small room with warmth and glow; it danced on the numerous prettinesses which were Polly's own creations; on the rustic flower-stands and brackets, on the bright hearth and thick, fleecy, crimson rug, and on Polly herself, who stood on the rug, putting a brilliant cluster of scarlet verbenas in her hair, and looking at herself in the mirror over the mantelpiece.

"Only see how handsome she is," cried Cicely. "There was an old woman in the room with her, a few minutes ago, and the girl was making her laugh. I wonder who she can be? Do you know, Gaston? I almost fancied I saw Mr. Popham call there, this morning."

"Perhaps it was Popham," answered Framleigh, rather failing in his effort to speak unconcernedly. "He knows them very well. She—she is an actress, and her name is Pemberton."

Cicely's countenance quite fell.

"An actress!" she exclaimed. "Oh, dear, how dreadful! She looks like a lady. And I did so admire her." This in such a disappointed tone.

"You may continue to admire her, with perfect safety to yourself," said Framleigh, a trifle dryly. "She is a lady."

Cicely looked up at him, sensible of feeling a slight shock. His expression was an irritated one. Was it possible that he knew the girl, and—and even admired her too? What would mamma and Hildegard think? What would they say? Was it possible that an actress could be a lady? Cicely knew her mother's and sister's views upon the subject; but since she had been with Gaston, she had been allowed a wider range of thought, and had dared to flutter out once or twice into a new world of opinion, though, of course, she had not dared to flutter far.

"Do—do you know her?" she ventured.

"Yes," he answered. "I know her."

"Oh!" timidly. "Is she nice, Gaston?"

"Nice!" he repeated. "I scarcely know what that means. It is not a man's word. But I think she is what women call 'nice.'"

"And clever?"

"People think so."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes. I may as well confess that I do."

"Gaston," hesitatingly, after a moment's pause, "Do you know her very well? You do not go to see her now."

"I went to see her, until she was kind enough to tell me to stay at home," not a little bitterly.

"Told you to stay at home!" exclaimed Cicely, aghast. "Told *you* to stay at home! How dare she! Why, she cannot be a lady!"

"That is a matter of opinion. It was I who made a clumsy idiot of myself, my dear Cicely, and it served me right," in a burst.

There was his confession. There was a revelation he had never before made even, to himself. He had come to it by degrees. He had come to it through months of secret re-

bellion, and through divers struggles to retain that characteristic hauteur and frigidity of his. He had held himself grandly aloof, as he thought, from any parleyings with conscience; but they had been going on, nevertheless, and gradually they had been converted in spite of resentment and pride. Bah! Let him give it up, and own himself conquered, however hard it was. It was useless to ask himself now, whether his heart was touched, or not. It was touched, and he knew it was. He, too, had lost the victory. He too had fallen into the careless net of this indifferent young syren. He had fallen in love with Pretty Polly P., just as Teddy Popham had done, long ago—even he!

## CHAPTER VII.

## ACROSS THE WAY.

IT was not likely that Cicely's first look across the way would be her last, and it is just as little to be expected that Polly, having heard of the new arrival, should not be somewhat curious also. When she watered her window-garden, she glanced up at the tall house, which so far threw her own small domicile into the shade, and her eyes always lingered, for a moment or so, on the window of the pretty drawing-room, and nearly every day she was rewarded by the sight of the unconsciously imposing young princess, in whom she had begun to take quite a friendly interest. And on her part, Cicely looked down into Polly's parlor, even oftener than Polly looked up into her drawing-room. This girl, whom even Gaston had found handsome and clever, must surely be worth watching, and the more she watched the more strongly and pleasantly the novelty attracted

her. That tiny parlor, how pretty and unique it was! That queer, good-natured old woman, who was plainly not exactly a lady, and that oddly-dressed old man, who was so clearly not exactly a gentleman, how queer they were, and yet how this lovely creature seemed to like and exert herself to amuse them! Surely there was no single point of resemblance between Gaston's Miss Pemberton, (she called Polly "Gaston's Miss Pemberton,") and the dreadful, painted, fast young persons she had always heard actresses described as being. It would have been a sheer impossibility for Polly to look fast, or to appear "loud" in attire. She was prone to charming soft colors and materials, her only brilliant weakness being a coquettish twist, or loop of geranium color, which the most fastidious could scarcely have failed to admire. Perhaps she exhausted her colors upon the stage, and liked a change in private life.

Of course, after a few days of watching from each window, the two began to know one another pretty well. Cicely had discovered that

Polly was even handsomer than she had found her at first, and Polly had seen that the regal air was very innocent and bewitching, and that the face across the way was unworldly and inexperienced as a child.

"If there was any way," Cicely dared to say to herself, "and it would not be wrong, I really think I should like to know her."

"It is out of the question to ever think of such a thing as making friends with her," sighed Polly, over her mignonette and geraniums. "If it wasn't, I declare I would nod to her across the street, and send her some flowers by Teddy."

Teddy was, after a manner, a sort of go-between, and heard the comments of each upon the other; for, among the things most unlikely was any probability that he should not visit his friend more faithfully than ever, and in making himself generally agreeable, make himself doubly agreeable to Cicely.

"How beautiful your Miss Pemberton is," said Cicely to him, in one of her confidential moments. "Even Gaston admires her, and

thinks her clever; and you know Gaston is not easily pleased."

No, Gaston was not, Teddy admitted; and then he inquired, with great depth of art, whether Miss Framleigh thought her brother admired Polly very much.

But Cicely rather hesitated to reply to the question, which Teddy had so diplomatically put.

"He thinks her very pretty—more than pretty," she answered. "Do you know Miss Dalrymple, Mr. Popham?"

Teddy had that honor.

"Gaston thinks Miss Pemberton more beautiful than she is, and Miss Dalrymple is a great beauty, you know, Mr. Popham. I asked him which style he admired the most, and he said Miss Pemberton's; and I quite agreed with him."

Cicely was not an absolute admirer of the fair Dalrymple. Diana had called upon her, in full state, a few days after her arrival, and the result had been the slight jarring of some fine, subtle chord in the more sensitive and



refined nature ; for though Cicely had received her with all the pretty, graceful ceremony of a young princess doing the honors of her father's house, an indescribable atmosphere surrounding her had held her visitor somewhat aloof.

"I do not like her," Cicely had said to Gaston, afterward. "I am sure I never could like her at all." And though she had evidently forgotten herself in making so open an announcement, she did not retract her opinion, even when she remembered how very frank it was. She did not like her.

Scarcely a visit of Teddy's to the smaller house ever passed without his discussing Cicely with Polly. Indeed, it might be said no visit was ended, without Cicely's having been the subject of one conversation, at least. And, apart from her own interest in the matter, Polly was prone to encouraging Teddy's admiration, for more reasons than one. If he would transfer his affection from herself to this pretty, refined girl, how much pleasanter it would be for all parties concerned ! He was such a generous,

affectionate young enthusiast, where his heart was touched, that she had quite mourned over him sometimes. It seemed so great a pity that all his faith and tenderness should be thrown away on a hard-hearted young woman like herself.

"But you know Teddy," she had been wont to say to him, in the long ago, before he had decided his pangs were of no avail, "you know, Teddy, it wouldn't do, it really wouldn't. I should never have the right sort of feeling for you, and you know I have an awful temper, Teddy; I should end by bullying you outright. I always do bully people when they are better than I am, and make me feel it," deprecatingly, "that is one of my worst points."

But now she thought, if he would only do the most natural thing in the world, and fall in love with this exquisite Cicely. Well, just see how happy he might be. They were so much better suited to each other, and Polly had no sentimental belief in the withering effect of a blighted first love, provided the blight was unavoidable, and not too cruel. She had

never been cruel to Teddy, she knew. Accordingly, she encouraged him to talk about the girl, and tried to draw him out upon the subject, and enlarged enthusiastically upon the charms she had taken stock of from her parlor-window.

"It is too bad to think I can't try to make friends with her," she said. "I should like to hear her talk."

"Why can't you make friends with her?" Teddy asked, with a doubtful expression.

"Oh," said Polly, quickly, "I can't. You know that." And she colored, uneasily.

"I don't see why," obtusely, "I think you might, Polly."

"Bah!" said Polly. "When you turn a man out of your house—"

"Did you turn Framleigh out of your house?" interrupted Teddy.

"I told him to stay at home," quite raspingly. "And he was very ready to admit that I had done him a good turn in doing so." And there she stopped, and bit her lip, feeling quite savage, because she had said so much. "At

any rate," she ended, "don't you know—has not your experience taught you—that women are dubious about me, and that it would be no end of stupid in me to be the first to advance toward Cicely Framleigh? I thought you were wiser than that, Teddy."

She did not need to advance toward Cicely Framleigh, however. The merest chance settled the matter for them both, with the assistance of Teddy Popham.

Perhaps the London air did not agree with Cicely very well, or perhaps the unusually cold winter was too much for her; at any rate, the middle of January found her suffering from a severe cold. Polly began to see her appearing at the window, first with a little blue scarf tied round her throat, and afterward with a large, blue shawl folded about her; and Teddy Popham, making frequent visits of inquiry, was grieved greatly by the aspect of his charmer. It was only an unromantic, little, feverish attack, but it was very troublesome, and sometimes the princess was pale, and sometimes she was flushed; and Teddy was

deeply concerned, notwithstanding the fact that she bore her ailments with the sweetest possible patience, even when prosaic influenza reigned supreme, and her charming little nose assumed a most trying shade of pink.

"You are as easily frightened as Gaston, Mr. Popham," she would say, sitting wrapped up in her shawls, in her favorite chair, and smiling at him sweetly. "It is not worth speaking of, I assure you."

And, really, there was nothing to be actually alarmed by, but, nevertheless, Teddy fancied he had serious cause for alarm during one of his visits.

He had dropped in before Gaston's arrival, and had found Cicely looking even paler than usual. The cold had reached its climax, and she was suffering from weakness and headache.

"It is very strange," she said during their conversation. "It is very strange that such a trifle as a cold should make me feel so dizzy. I feel as if I was not quite sure that I could stand. I wonder if I could."

"I scarcely think it would be wise to try,"

said Teddy, looking at her pretty, pale face and heavy eyes uneasily.

But she had risen to her feet, with a little laugh, and stood up trying to steady herself. It was soon evident to her anxious visitor that she found it a hard matter, for she turned paler all at once, and almost before the smile had died from her lips, he saw her eyes droop, and if he had not sprung forward, she would have fallen upon the hearth. As it was, she fell into his arms, with her head upon his shoulder, and her slight, pale hands hanging loose and strengthless.

He had never been more alarmed in his life than he was then, by the sight of the sweet, colorless face, and the helpless, girlish form. He had never seen any one faint before, and it was rather hard upon him that this should be his first experience. If it had been a man, he could have borne it better. But this was too much for him to preserve his calmness under. Wild thoughts of cologne and burnt feathers, and smelling-bottles darted through his agitated mind.

"What is a man to do?" he groaned. "She is as white as—as a lily, by Jupiter."

He rang the bell furiously, with his disengaged hand, even before he tried to lay her down; and the next minute Mrs. Batty and her satellites made their appearance, in a highly chaotic frame of mind. But, unfortunately, their ideas upon the subject of swoons were erratic, and mostly tended toward much excited dashing of glasses of ice-cold water, until Teddy's soft heart quailed within him, and he interfered.

"For heaven's sake, don't drown her!" he cried out frantically. "She's not strong enough to bear it. Wait a minute," a bright thought striking him. "I know some one who will understand what to do." And, snatching up his hat, he plunged down stairs and across the street for Polly.

He was back again with her in less than two minutes, and, being used to such cases, Polly was quite prepared for the combat.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## POLLY AND CICELY.

"OH!" she said, when she came to the arm-chair, "you have no need to be frightened, Teddy, it will soon be over."

Teddy had been right in his surmise that she would understand the case. Angelique, at the Prince's, was subject to fits of faintness, and no one could manage her so well as her favorite fellow-actress. Polly's mode of procedure had less cold water and more cool demeanor in it than Mrs. Batty's, Teddy observed with admiration; and, in a very short time, the landlady and her excited hand-maidens were gratefully dismissed.

"Some hot, spiced wine will do this cold good, Mrs. Batty," said Polly. "And I think we shall not need any more help, thank you. She is recovering nicely now, and I daresay it would rather disturb her to see so many of us."



It might make her think she had been frightening us more than she has."

So, when Cicely opened her eyes, the first object they rested on was Pretty Polly P., standing by the sofa on which they had laid her, with a vinaigrette in her hand.

"Oh, dear," she said, faintly. "I hope I have not been much trouble. I wonder how it happened." And then, while she still looked at Polly, a slight color stole into her cheeks. "It was very kind of you to come," she said, and smiled so sweet and grateful a smile that Teddy was quite ravished.

"I was very glad to come," answered Polly. "Teddy—Mr. Popham—saw that the rest were too excited to be sensible, so he ran across for me. I am used to seeing people faint."

She was really glad that she had been able to be of service; but now that all was over, she felt her ardor cooling somewhat, and would not have been sorry to find an excuse for slipping away. She had no fancy for remaining to meet her enemy. He might come in at any moment, she knew, and the thought disturbed

and excited her. And besides this, she remembered what she had said to Teddy about such women as Cicely Framleigh; how they were prone to look upon her a trifle coldly, and this held her back, too; so though her manner was neither cold nor ungracious, it was by no means effusive.

Cicely, however, was too sweet-natured to allow of any reserve. And then was not this "Gaston's Miss Pemberton"? She turned her face toward Teddy, half timidly, and favored him with a smile, too.

"I am very much indebted to you, Mr. Popham," she said. "And I am quite glad that I fainted. I have looked at you so often through my window, Miss Pemberton," to Polly, "and—and I wanted so much to know you."

Naturally, it was not easy to get away after such a speech as this, particularly when the kind, grateful little hand was held out, quite appealingly.

"Gaston must thank you, too," said the impressionable young princess. "It was Gaston who first told me your name."

At that very minute Polly's color began to mount to her cheeks, and she straightened herself a little, and stood more erect. She heard Framleigh upon the stairs, and before Cicely had time to say more than "he is coming now," he was in the room, looking at the small group, at Cicely on her sofa, at Polly, with her vinaigrette, at Teddy standing near, with mingled anxiety and surprise.

"Don't be alarmed," said Cicely. "Miss Pemberton, tell him nothing is the matter. I only fainted, Gaston, and Miss Pemberton was kind enough to come to the rescue."

He came forward, bowing low to Polly, who spoke to him with her coolest air.

"She is better now," she said, "so, of course, there is no cause for alarm. The faintness was only the result of a little weakness. She has been neglecting this cold of hers."

It was quite a surprise to Polly to find him so deeply concerned. He was almost affectionate in his manner as he bent over their invalid. He took the slight, feverish hand, and held it while he made his inquiries; and

once he touched the bright hair quite tenderly.

Regard for Cicely induced Polly to receive his thanks as graciously as she could force herself to receive them. But she took her departure as soon as possible after his arrival. Uncle Jack would be waiting for his tea, she informed them. He would not enjoy it if she was not there to pour it out; and, besides, it was nearly time for her to go to the theatre.

"When your cold is better," she said to Cicely, "ask Capt. Framleigh to bring you to the Prince's to see me act."

She looked at Framleigh, as she spoke, with just the least touch of defiant challenge in her eyes. Then she went home with Teddy.

"Now," said that young man, triumphantly, when they stood in her parlor. "Now you see what a graceful, lovable creature she is!"

"Yes," answered Polly.

"And I am sure," continued Teddy, "that you cannot complain that Framleigh is cold in his manner, toward her, at least."

Polly set her mouth into an obstinate curve, as she looked into the fire.

"Teddy," she said, "Framleigh is the sort of man who would be kind to any woman who would fall down and worship him, as that nice, little, thorough-bred sister of his does; but all women could not do it, you know. I couldn't, for instance, if I was in her place. It isn't in me, perhaps," curving her neck, grandly, "because I was not born a lady."

She sent Montmorenci to make inquiries concerning Cicely's health, the next morning; but it was two or three days before she went to the house herself, and then her visit was the briefest of calls.

"Did you ever think that your Miss Pemberton was a proud girl?" Cicely asked her brother that night.

"It did not occur to me, at first, that she could be," he said dryly, and rather bitterly too; "but I have thought so lately."

"I think," returned Cicely, reflectively, "that she is very proud, and—well, just a bit inaccessible."

Remembering his first impressions of Polly, and his lofty disapproval of her *nonchalance*, and high spirits, and occasional touches of theatrical slang, Framleigh smiled a smile that was positively savage. He was savage in his self-contempt. It was terribly rasping to feel himself so egregious a blunderer. What a consequential fool Polly must think him.

"I did not seem to make way with her at all," went on Cicely, shaking her head, and speaking in a sort of soliloquy.

"That was because she dislikes me," rashly.

"Dislikes you!" echoed Cicely. "How can she? How could anybody dislike you?" with tender enthusiasm.

Framleigh took the gentle hand, which she had laid on his shoulder, and caressed it.

"Every one does not see me through your eyes, Cicely," he said. "You are a kind, loving little creature, my dear."

His intercourse with the girl had been productive of good results for both. He had gained warmth of manner and feeling. She had gained courage. He found it easier than

he had ever fancied it would be to speak tenderly, and bestow caresses upon her. The contracted loneliness of his whole previous life had been his bane. He had become cold and selfish through it, and this change was exactly what his nature had required. When he had seen her at home, in his brief visits, he had never thought he would be so fond of Cicely.

## CHAPTER IX.

## IN WHICH COMES A CLIMAX.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fact that she had not found her acquaintance with Polly progress rapidly, Cicely did not allow herself to be actually chilled.

"I will take all the more pains to make friends with her," she said to herself. "If Gaston has vexed her, there is the greater reason for my trying to please her, for his sake."

So, as soon as she was well enough, she attired herself in all her modest bravery, and made a call upon the young mistress of the house opposite, and spent half an hour in the small parlor, and quite won Montmorenci's heart, by her grace and simple elegance, and innocent, kindly respect of manner. She won upon Polly, too, as indeed she would have won upon any one else. Not being positively stony-hearted, Polly found it hard to resist her, even when she ventured to hope that they



would see each other often, and become friends, instead of mere acquaintances.

"When I came here first," Cicely said, "I thought I should only remain a week or so; but Gaston seems to want me more than ever now, and he makes me so happy, and is so kind, that I should feel sorry to leave him, even to go home." This last added as a matter of duty to mamma and Hilda. "You have no brother, Miss Pemberton?"

"No," answered Polly. "None but Teddy Popham. Teddy adopted me, you know. He is a very good substitute."

"I should think he would be," said Cicely. "He seems very kind to everybody. Gaston is very fond of him."

It was always "Gaston" with Cicely. She would have had her doubts about the Angel Gabriel if Gaston had not approved of him. But, despite this amiable weakness, Polly could not help liking her, and giving way to her in the face of her own private prejudices.

After this call, it was so natural that the two should become friends in earnest, that it was

even unavoidable. But Polly managed her visits diplomatically. She never forgot the time of Framleigh's incomings, and if she chanced to encounter him, it was always on her way home; and this only occurred once or twice, when he was a trifle earlier than usual. It was useless for Cicely to plead. Uncle Jack's tea and the theatre were always ready as excuses.

"Do you think I would run the risk of being obliged to stay, or run away?" she said to Teddy. "No, I tell you, I would rather know that we stand just as we do. Let us be neither friends nor enemies."

But it was ordained otherwise.

Cold as his friends called him, and cold as he seemed, Framleigh was scarcely of a cold temperament, in truth. He had his inner fires, and Polly had the power to rouse them. It was wonderful how her obstinate indifference stung him. He felt positively fierce, sometimes, when he thought of her cleverness in avoiding him.

"Does she think that I would attempt to

intrude upon her?" he said to Cicely. "She has no need to fear it." And he quite longed to prove to her that he could stand as far aloof as she wished.

But she gave him so little opportunity, that she almost drove him frantic. In secret, he was goaded to madness, and when at last fortune gave him the chance she refused, he could not control himself, as he had meant to do.

Cicely had arranged a window garden, upon the model of Polly's own, and during its arrangements, numerous unceremonious visits had been interchanged between the two girls. Cicely had run over to Polly for instruction, and Polly, in her turn had crossed the street, with seeds, and slips, and bulbs. So one afternoon, coming in unexpectedly, Framleigh entered the room, to behold Polly standing by the flower-boxes, with the tiny trowel in her hand.

"I am glad," she began, turning round, but seeing who it was, she stopped, and froze at once. "Oh, it is you!" she said, the hand holding the trowel dropping down at her side.

"I beg pardon. I thought it was Miss Framleigh. She was out when I came, and as I had brought her some rather delicate slips, I took the liberty of remaining to put them in the boxes. They needed attention at once."

He came to her side.

"You are very kind," he began.

"Not at all," interposed Polly, coolly. "I am fond of plants, you know. I have finished now, luckily," forgetting how the word would sound. "So I will go. I daresay you will tell your sister——"

The haughty color flashed over his face. He could not help interrupting her.

"I am very unfortunate having made myself so obnoxious to you that you feel yourself lucky——"

"I ask pardon." Polly stopped him, without appearing in the least disturbed, however. "Luckily was a stupid word to use."

"It is I who should ask pardon for intruding upon you," he said, in restless anger.

"'Intruding' is as absurd a word as 'luck-

ily,'" said Polly. "Will you tell Miss Framleigh——"

"I will tell her how unfortunate I have been," he returned, with no slight touch of galled bitterness. "Cicely should respect highly the brother who deprives her of her friends."

Polly checked herself in the act of shrugging her shoulders, and turned round to touch up a plant; but she made no remark; and her indifference fired Framleigh all the more. He had never been so cavalierly treated in his life. It seemed this girl's forte to stab him in the weakest part of his armor of exclusiveness, and render it useless.

"You force me to defend myself," he broke forth.

"Against what?" Polly asked, concisely.

"Against my own humiliation," he answered. "For even Cicely sees how you avoid me. Are you afraid of me, Miss Pemberton?" with savage irony.

"Not at all," answered Polly.

"Then why exercise such diplomacy in

keeping out of my way? Pray, give me the chance to prove to you, that no danger will accrue from your facing me occasionally." Then his voice and manner changed suddenly, both at once. A shadow fell upon his face, and showed her how careworn it was. "I am very fond of Cicely," he said, "and Cicely is very fond of me. In fact, I think I may say that Cicely is about the only creature on earth who is honestly fond of me; but she is both affectionate and ignorant, as you know. I believe she even respects me, Miss Pemberton," with another touch of sarcasm, "and I cannot afford to lose her respect. I scarcely like the idea of appearing contemptible in her eyes, as I must appear, under existing circumstances."

"Do you mean," demanded Polly, sharply, "that *I* make you appear contemptible in Cicely's eyes?"

"How can it be otherwise?" he asked.

She hesitated a moment, and then got the better of her hesitation.

"Nothing would make you appear contemptible to Cicely," she said.

"Thank you," with even more irony than before. "You are very kind."

Polly glanced out of the window, into the street.

"Here is Miss Framleigh now," she said.

In two minutes Cicely came in, bright and glowing, from her walk, and greatly rejoiced at the sight of Polly in conference with Gaston. It must be a friendly conference, she thought.

"How kind of you to come," she said. "And how good you were to stay. And you will let me keep you, for the rest of the evening, will you not? Montmorenci can take care of Mr. Pemberton for once."

What impulse prompted Polly to acquiesce, it would be hard to say. Perhaps it was a touch of obstinacy or defiance. Perhaps she felt a desire to prove her strength and indifference. If he really thought she was afraid of him, it was as well that he should learn that she was not. Afraid! She repeated the word to herself with great scorn. What should she be afraid of?

She stayed, however, and made herself very

amusing. Teddy Popham, who came in during the evening, thought he had never seen her in a more entertaining mood. And yet he saw that she had altered somehow of late. She was not so simple and good-humored; she made more clever speeches of a sharp and rather satiric nature, and she was less open.

"There is something wrong about you, Polly," he said to her, in guileless confidence, afterward. "You are changing every day."

"People generally do change as they grow older," was Polly's unsatisfactory reply.

"Older!" exclaimed Teddy, and then all at once he stopped, and looked at her face. "Well," he said, "you have grown older, I believe; but it isn't in the way you mean, Polly."

"Isn't it?" said Polly. "Charmed to hear it, I'm sure." And her air and tone were so listless and cool, that the subject dropped of its own accord.

She changed her tactics with regard to Framleigh, however, for reasons best known to herself. She avoided him no longer, and she no longer refused Cicely's invitations. She often



spent her evenings in their parlor, and Cicely's admiration of her became stronger every day. Framleigh himself could only look on. He found himself standing as far aloof as ever. He, too, discovered that she had changed. She was even growing handsomer, and her beauty was becoming of a more pronounced type. Her dormant power was beginning to develop and assert itself. Her slender, straight young figure was actually more imposing than the fair Dalrymple's more liberal curves. She carried her head higher, and flashed out as Diana never did. There was less repose about Polly, and more of prideful fire.

"My dear," said Diana to Cicely, during one of her numerous friendly calls, "is it possible that you know what that young woman is?"

"I know," answered the princess, with a pretty touch of dignity, "that she is my friend, and that I am very fond of her."

It must be confessed that the position was a difficult one for Diana. She could not neglect Cicely, of course—though what a remarkable whim this whim of Cicely's of visiting her

brother was, to be sure—she could not neglect Cicely, any one would understand, and yet, in making her gracious calls at the house, she constantly found that she must confront this young person of whom she could not approve. And she must be civil to her also, which was the worst part of it. If she might have ignored her, it would have made her more comfortable; but Polly, with her tall, straight, lovely form, and steady, fire-flashing eyes, and red contemptuous lips, was not so easily ignored. Polly could not move, could not speak, could not glance toward her without defying her in a subtle way, and suggesting to her that she knew her weak points, and could have made divers sharp speeches concerning them if she had chosen. And then again, was there not Gaston, who actually treated this girl with the loftiest respect even though she slighted, and was sometimes half-rude to him? Affairs had arrived at a strange pass, indeed.

But if she could not openly slight her enemy, she was not left entirely without resources. She patronized her with a delicate condescension,

and occasionally affected to encourage her, and though it was only at times that she dared to do this, and though at none of these times did Miss Polly quail before her, the strategy was not without its result—she managed to rasp her victim, and render her temper anything but amiable, and when she was not amiable, strangely enough, it was always one person who suffered, and that was Gaston himself.

The Prince's was often honored with the presence of Capt. Gaston Framleigh in these days. It was the one luxury the young man allowed himself, and even Cicely did not know how often he indulged in it. Polly did, however. After the first two or three times of seeing the well-known face, in the certain row, she was never afterward unconscious of it, when it was present. However angry she might feel at her own weakness, she could not help knowing that it was there, looking harassed, and discontented, and a shade care-worn, and always following her with its proud, reproachful eyes. For the time came when they were reproachful, though what right they had to reproach

her, Polly professed not to know. It was nonsense, she said to herself, sheer nonsense! But it made her uncomfortable, and once or twice she had narrowly escaped losing self-possession under them. Her manner toward Framleigh in private was captious, haughty, and severe. The gentle, kindly young princess was quite touched and wounded by it sometimes, and listened with actual pain to her cold, or satirical speeches. When the handsome, black brows drew themselves together into that slight, yet ominous frown, Cicely shrank, in spite of herself.

"You quite frighten me, sometimes," she would say. "You are so quick, and say such cutting things. And, somehow, dear, it always seems to be Gaston who makes you angry. And yet, I am sure, you don't mean to be cruel."

"But I think I do," Polly had answered her, suddenly, once. "At least I am not sure that I don't. I like to say sharp things that cut people I am not fond of. And I may as well confess, that I am not fond of your brother. I

am not like you—it is not easy for me to forgive.” And the black brows knitted themselves then in earnest. “Capt. Framleigh made me angry once, and I have not forgiven him?”

“Oh, Polly,” cried pretty Cicely, piteously, “And shall you never forgive him?”

“I don’t know,” answered Polly. “The fact is, I never think about that; but, at any rate, I have not forgiven him yet.”

It is probable that she was all the harder upon him because, now and then, she found herself pitying him, in secret, though grudgingly. Of course it was rather hard that he should have all his brilliant prospects fading away; upon the whole, it was very hard, and taking all things into consideration—debts, for instance, among them—it was no wonder that he was growing pale and care-worn. She had found out, from Cicely, that these debts had begun to press upon him, even more heavily and gallingly than they had done. He had told Cicely that he had even entertained the idea of selling his commission, and trying to get into business, “though he hates business

so," Cicely added, with tears. "It is dreadful," she said. "And there are days when he neither eats nor sleeps; and once, when one of these horrible men came, and spoke so roughly to him, he told me that he must send me home, because I ought not to know anything about such things; and he could not bear to let me be troubled; but I said that I could not bear to leave him all by himself, and, indeed, I don't think I ought to do it, either. Do you, dear?"

"No," replied Polly, decidedly. "I would not;" and then she colored furiously, as if she had made a slip, and was vexed at having done so. "If I were his sister," she added, rather disjointedly.

"If——" faltered Cicely, after a pause, "if he would marry Diana Dalrymple, Uncle Gaston would make friends with him, and let things go on just as they did before. At least he has almost said as much."

"Then he should marry her, by all means," said Polly, with such a satiric air that Cicely looked up at her in gentle wonder. "It seems

that it would be a good thing for both of them. Why doesn't he do it? He has only to ask her, of course; or, perhaps, he might dispense with the ceremony."

"You are sneering at Gaston, again, Polly," said Cicely, almost inspired to take up arms. "And you are unjust as usual. That is not Gaston's way. He is a gentleman."

"And Miss Dalrymple is a lady," said Polly, "and so may expect consideration."

Upon this subject of sending Cicely back to Yorkshire, Framleigh had thought seriously. Instead of improving, matters became worse every day. He had less hope, and his creditors were more impatient. He began to see the desperateness of his position. The end of it all was, that he must do something decided. And what was there to be done? He could only dispose of his commission, and the small remnant of his worldly goods, and go down in the social scale a few grades lower. He might pay his more important debts, go to "Bare-acres" for a while, and then throw himself upon the world. His ideas of what his future

was to be were so indefinite and unreal, that he sneered at them himself. As a gentleman at leisure he had not learned his lesson of life in a practical school. But there was not much use in talking to Cicely. Cicely wanted to stay, and help him to fight his battles out. Let her only stay with him until all was over, and he had no further need for her presence, and then she would go to Yorkshire and Bare-acres without a word of protest. And he would see, too, that she could be practical and helpful. There were hundreds of things she could do, she was quite sure. And then she would take his hand, and hold it caressingly, as she pleaded, sometimes kissing it gently, and laying her cheek against it, with her eyes full of tears of pity for him.

"Even Polly thinks I ought not to leave you," she said, at last, one day.

Even Polly! Did Polly condescend to give the matter a thought? Framleigh colored, and yet felt a sort of uneasy pleasure in the idea.

"Have you been talking to her about it?" he asked.



"I am so fond of her, and she is so clever," said Cicely, half-apologetically. "We talk to each other about everything. You don't care, do you dear?"

No, he answered her, he did not care; and recognizing the influence Miss Pemberton exerts over her affectionate, easily-influenced nature, a plan suggests itself to him. He really thinks it would be best for her to return to Yorkshire, before the unpleasant winding-up of his affairs, which he sees must come, despite its galling unpleasantness. He is fastidious about Cicely, and does not like the thought of allowing her to be brought into contact with the rough side of life. But it will not be easy to convince her, he knows. So he thinks of Miss Pemberton, who has been good enough to hint that it is her duty to stay.

"If she tells her that it is her duty to go, Cicely will believe her, in spite of her inclinations," he says to himself.

Accordingly, he presents himself, to Polly's great astonishment, in the small parlor, the next evening, just at the time when the young lady

is waiting for Uncle Jack. Montmorenci has gone out to buy tea-cakes, and Miss Polly, being alone, rises to greet her unexpected visitor, rises with an air of great state and gravity. She would like to know what has brought him. But, of course, she cannot ask the question, and is obliged to wait until he explains himself, which he does almost immediately.

He was very brief and non-effusive about it, using no more words than were absolutely necessary in his explanation ; and yet, for all this, not appearing as self-contained as he might have been, under different circumstances.

He would not attempt to disguise, he said, indeed it would be absurd to attempt to disguise, what Miss Pemberton already knew. He was involved in serious difficulties, and found that he must alter his mode of life. And among the many things he must give up, he must even give up Cicely. He should go to Yorkshire himself, after all was over, but he wished Cicely to go first, to go as early as possible, in fact. He was desirous of sparing her

the annoyance of facing the total wreck of even this remnant of his lost fortunes. And for this reason he had called upon Miss Pemberton. He could not persuade Cicely that it would be best for her to leave him to himself, and from a few words she had let drop, he had discovered that she believed her friend agreed with her in her opinion.

"I did agree with her," interposed Polly, suddenly. "I was glad she was strong enough not to shrink from trifles. I thought she was right in staying, and I told her so."

She drew her slim figure up, and looked decided, but she kept her eyes as much away from Framleigh as she could. She found it pleasanter to look at the fire.

But Framleigh was decided, too.

"It was generous of her to have so much courage," he said. "But I do not wish that she should make the sacrifice, and——"

"If you do not wish it," interposed Polly, again, "I think she had better go."

"I think," said Framleigh, "that you are misunderstanding me. But, nevertheless, if

you will be so kind as to tell her that you feel that she had better go, you will oblige me. I came here to ask you to do so."

Reluctantly, and quite in spite of herself, Polly raised her eyes from the fire, and favored him with a swift glance of inspection. If she could have held herself severely cold, she would have done so, but as soon as she had looked at him, she found her mood changing. He was paler, and more care-worn than she had ever seen him; he was even thinner. It struck her all at once that he must have suffered more keenly than any of them had fancied. Something in this appeal of his touched her, too. Where had his frigidity and lofty *hauteur* gone? How was it, that he could deign to come to her, after she had treated him with such sharp contempt? He certainly would not have come to save himself any trouble or pain, she knew that much of him. And must there not be some redeeming point in the nature of a man, who, being so proud, could yet sacrifice his pride for the sake of another? She felt inclined to believe, now,

that he really did care for Cicely unselfishly, after all her own sneers at him. He must care for her, or he would not have done this. And yet, even while she thought this, she grudged the relenting in her tone when she spoke to him. It was not easy, as I have said before—it was not easy for her to forgive.

"I am sorry," she said. "I am sorry that there is no alternative." And then, remembering what Cicely had said about the alternative of his marrying Diana Dalrymple, the warm blood mounted to her cheeks.

He remembered this alternative too, and flinched as he remembered it. He wondered if she had heard. It seemed very likely, considering Cicely's remark about their talking over "everything."

"There is no alternative that I choose to accept," he said.

"I think," commented Polly, dryly, "that I should accept almost any."

Then he knew that she had heard, and the next minute Polly saw that she had committed

herself, in her anxiety to appear ignorant, and make a slightly cutting speech.

But Framleigh kept himself well under control, despite his knowledge of the fact that she knew as much of his position as he did himself. He returned to his subject as collectedly as he could.

Would she speak to Cicely? Might he depend upon her to do so?

"As you wish it so much," she answered, "I suppose I must; but I am not at all sure that it will be of any use."

He thanked her, feeling stung, notwithstanding his relief, by an inward conviction that she thought him ungracious. He did not mean to be ungracious, and it was hard enough to face the prospect of bearing all his petty humiliation alone; but pride, as well as affection, forbade him to allow Cicely to share them with him. It was not very easy to bid her good-night, and go away, without attempting to clear himself, and trying to show her what he really meant; but experience had taught him that any effort at explanation would only place

him in an additional false position. So he went away in silence.

It is possible, however, that Miss Polly had received her sting also, though even I, her chronicler, cannot explain when she had received it, or in what manner. But if she had not received a touch of one sort or another, why should she have so knitted her lovely black brows, and have shown such discontent and annoyance, when her visitor was gone, and had left her alone to her thoughts? She stirred the fire, frowning, and seated herself in her chair, frowning, and as she sat and looked at the bed of coals, she was frowning still, and looking very severe.

“It serves him right,” she said, quite sternly “But—but it is bad enough, of course; and it is very hard, for Cicely.” And the next minute, strange to say, something large and bright slipped down her cheek, and lay a sparkling drop upon her hand—a sparkling drop which was nothing less significant than a great, lovely tear. I am of the opinion, too, that this tear would have been followed by others, if she had

been allowed leisure ; but she was not allowed it ; for the very moment this first bright drop fell, there came the sound of Uncle Jack's latch-key ; and when the front-door opened, it was evident that Uncle Jack was in a most extraordinary state of hurry and excitement, for he did not even give himself time to dispose of his hat, but came bursting into the room, breathless, and even more boisterous and blatant than usual ; and without leaving her time to utter a word, caught her in his stout arms, and embraced her with fervor.

“Go and tell old Buxton to go to the devil, Polly, my girl !” he roared, joyously, and with the most exhilarating spirit. “Tell him to go to the devil, and stop there. We've done with him, I tell you ! We've done with dancing, and fiddling, and cutting capers, my dear, for your fortune's made, and Pretty Polly P. is as heavy a swell as any of them.”



## CHAPTER X.

## IN WHICH WE ARE SURPRISED.

THERE was something a little unusual in Polly's manner, during the two following weeks, Cicely thought; there was something about her not easily understood. Sometimes she was silent and abstracted, and then again she might almost have been influenced by some strong, but secret and restrained excitement. She was not herself, it was plain, and she was actually nervous. And yet, it could scarcely be anything decidedly unpleasant that disturbed her. Cicely, at least, was sure it could not be, for she had never found her friend so amiable, and certainly she had never found her so affectionate, as she was at this time.

"And, sometimes, when I look at you, Polly," she said to her, "when you have been quiet for a moment or so, you seem to have quite forgotten yourself, and you are smiling as if you were

thinking of something that made you happy. What is it?"

"It!" repeated Polly. "I can't tell you, I am sure, what it is. It is just as probable as not that it is only a mood. I am full of moods, you know. Let us be thankful that this is not a disagreeable one."

"It is anything but a disagreeable one," said Cicely, admiring her. "It is very nice. It makes me feel as if something delightful had happened to you."

"Perhaps something delightful is going to happen to me," said Polly. "Let us hope so. I think I could bear it."

Somehow or other, they always seemed to drift away from the subject before Cicely's surmises were more than surmises of the vaguest description; but it was not until long afterward that she began to suspect that anything more than chance had changed the topic of their conversation. But, then, Cicely had her own troubles to think of, and more important still, these troubles of Gaston's. She was quite desperate about Gaston, now and then—so

desperate, indeed, that even the daring plan of privately appealing to his obdurate relative had flitted through her affectionate little brain.

"If his debts were only paid, you know," she said to Polly, "there would be no need of his selling his commission, and he could live upon his pay, poor fellow, until something occurred."

Cicely had an innocent belief that something must "occur," ultimately, which would raise her idol to his old gilded pedestal. Fortune could surely never be so cruel as to ignore his evidently just claims. She might pass other men by, but Gaston—Gaston was so different.

"And I could stay with him," she went on. "I shall have a little money, though it is only a very little, when I am of age, and I could sell grandmamma's jewels, if he would let me. Grandmamma left me her jewels, and though the settings are quaint and old-fashioned, the stones are very good. If the debts were only paid, I am sure we could be happy, if we were not rich. Don't you think so, Polly?"

And Polly answered her that she did think so, and then all at once lapsed into one of

those mysterious fits of forgetfulness, in which her great, dark eyes wore their most pre-occupied and solemn look.

So Cicely continued her impractical, but eager planning, and wondered what Uncle Gaston would say, if she dared at last to appeal to him, and what her brother would say, if her appeal was successful, and wondered whether he would be very much displeased at the sacrifice of his pride; and then felt sure he would, and so faltered, and longed, and pondered, until she felt as if she could not give the matter up, and was more loth than ever to face the sacrifices of the beloved one.

And after all this, judge of her surprise, judge of her unutterable thankfulness for the sudden turn of Fortune's wheel which eventually occurred, just before it was too late, in the very nick of time, as it were.

One dreary evening, when she was feeling unusually dispirited, and was just making up her mind that she must give up, and go back to Yorkshire, obediently and without delay, she was surprised to hear Gaston coming up

the staircase hurriedly—surprised, because he was not in the habit of coming in until an hour later.

“Why, Gaston,” she exclaimed, as he entered. “It is scarcely five!”

He came to the fire, looking excited, and even pale, the expression of his face a disturbed, and yet, curiously enough, an almost relieved one. “I hardly know how to tell you,” he said. “It is so singular.”

“What is singular?” she interrupted, in spite of herself. “What has happened?”

“Yes,” he answered. “Something has happened. It is like the climax in a play, or a point in a novel. Mr. Gaston has paid my debts—paid them to the last farthing!”

It was such a relief to her, and was at the same time so startling, that she could scarcely take it all in. She flew to him, and caught hold of his arm in wild delight and amazement, tears of joy leaping to her eyes.

“Oh, Gaston!” she cried. “How glad—how glad I am! I can hardly believe it! How did it happen? When did you learn it? Is he

going to forgive you? Can I stay with you now? It seems like a dream!"

"It is like a dream to me," said Framleigh. "I only learned it about an hour ago; and I cannot comprehend yet what it means. He has not even allowed his name to be mentioned, and has not written a word of explanation to me; but the bills are paid, and, of course, it is he who has paid them. I do not think it is a sign of returning favor, however. I think it is a caprice on his part, and I fancy that he means the matter to end here; so you see, greatly as I am relieved, I am placed in an awkward enough position. It would be like him even to ignore any thanks I might offer to him; And his face fell and shadowed as he spoke.

"I am grateful," he added, at last, in an altered tone; "but there is a sting in it, Cicely, there is a sting."

"But," said Cicely, "I think he must mean to make friends with you."

"I am sure he does not," returned Framleigh. "And if he did—well, there would be a sting in that too," in a wearied voice.

"A sting!" she echoed.

"Yes," was his answer. "But it would not rest in the friendship; it would lie in the old luxurious dependence. That would be harder to face now." But, seeing her tender, bewildered look, he broke off suddenly, relieving her with a smile. "But there will be no need for our parting, now," he said, "if you are not tired of your slow life. Thank fortune for that. It would have been hard enough to part with you, Cicely."

"Would it?" she said, with shy delight. "I am so glad, Gaston." And she clung to the hand she held, in a pretty fervor that quite touched him.

That evening, Framleigh wrote his letter of thanks to his uncle, and a delicate task it was. He was placed in an ungracious enough position, one may see, in being rendered so greatly the debtor of a benefactor, who had not deigned him a word, and who, ten to one, had no other motive in his generosity than a sort of churlish pride. The elder Gaston was not an amiable individual, as we have hinted, and it was a

fashion of his to bestow favors in a manner which made them hard to swallow.

And the letter having been written and sent, the result was exactly what Framleigh had anticipated. In a few days it was returned, unopened, from Gaston Court, and without a word of comment. Framleigh brought it enclosed in its envelope, and showed it to Cicely, with a rather stony look in his face.

"I knew it would be so," he said, "but the knowledge scarcely makes it more agreeable to contemplate. This means that he will have none of me, and that he has merely relieved me of my difficulties to save the family pride. It is just what I expected." And he tossed both letter and envelope into the fire, and watched them blaze up and die out, thinking that the blackened, curling ashes were not unlike those once dazzling expectations of his.



## CHAPTER XI.

## A SURPRISE TO CICELY.

OF course, Polly heard all about this, and of course, Polly both condoled and rejoiced with her friend; and Cicely was delighted to observe that she looked as much relieved as she herself had felt.

"It is news worth hearing, that you will not have to go away," was her comment. "I should have missed you, every hour of the day. You think there is no danger of your mother sending for you, Cicely?"

"Oh, no," said Cicely, quickly. "There is no danger of that, I am sure. You see, both mamma and Hilde are—are different. They would not live in London in the plain way I do, and so, of course, they do not care to come at all; and so long as I am safe with Gaston, I don't complain. I—well, I almost think they feel relieved."

"Oh!" said Polly, and then began to won-

der, with some shrewdness, whether the august twain would be as much at ease if they knew that this fair young scion of their house was consorting with such dangerous companions as play-acting young women and their amiable duennas. It seemed as if wonders were not to cease.

The first surprise had not died out of Cicely's mind before another presented itself; and a surprise, too, of so startling a nature that it was an absolute shock of bewilderment.

Just six weeks after the date of Framleigh's relief, Polly walked in upon Cicely, with a marvelous piece of news to relate. She came in between twilight and dark, and almost as soon as her first greetings were over, delivered her announcement as suddenly as if she had shot it out of a cannon.

"Cicely," she said, "something delightful has happened to me."

Cicely looked at her brilliant color in surprise.

"It must be something very nice, indeed,"

she said. "Your cheeks look like carnations. What is it?"

"It is something very nice, indeed," said Polly. "I have had five thousand pounds a year left to me."

Cicely sprang up with a cry.

"Five thousand pounds——"

"A year," said Polly, nodding her handsome head, "per annum, you know. So, I think I shall give old Buxton notice. Wouldn't you?"

"Oh, Polly," cried Cicely, quite stunned, and at the same time not a little puzzled by her friend's coolness of demeanor. "This is like a chapter out of a novel! Are you sure it is true? Where did it come from? Oh, how glad you must be!"

"It came from Scotland, from Ayrshire, where my great aunt, Mrs. Alison Rossitur, lived and died. My mother was an Alison Rossitur, but after she ran away with my father, her friends would not see her again, and she was quite cut off from them. As to this money—the fact is, Mrs. Alison Rossitur was a whimsical old body, and rather quarrelsome,

and I fancy she left her money to me because she had quarrels with every one else."

She spoke quite coolly about it, almost indifferently, Cicely thought. It might have been one of her most frequent experiences to find herself the possessor of a goodly fortune. It quite bewildered Cicely to see her sit down, as she did afterward, and begin to discuss prospects, and form plans with all the non-chalant composure in the world. Of course, there would have to be some change in her mode of life, and this must be talked about. Where was the new house to be, and how was it to be furnished? These were the questions to be settled now, and she wanted Cicely to help her to settle them.

"She talked about it as if she had been expecting such a thing for years, and had thought about it often enough not to care much," said Cicely to Gaston, in their after-conversation upon the subject. "I am sure *I* should have been quite excited."

It was somewhat unaccountable, she thought, that the news should seem to disturb Gaston

so; for she was quite sure that it did disturb him. When first she revealed to him Polly's good fortune, he became quite pale, and all her enthusiasm did not rouse him to anything like brightness. It could not be that he was not glad; of course he was glad; and yet it seemed as if a shadow fell upon him at once.

"She will not act any more now," Cicely said. "And I cannot help feeling a little sorry for her friends at the Prince's. They will miss her so."

"And we shall miss her, too," added Framleigh, almost involuntarily.

"We?" said Cicely. "She is not going away from us altogether, Gaston."

"I think we shall find that she will, in the end," he answered. "Other people will fill up her time, and she will have so many new responsibilities."

Which observation caused Cicely to burst forth, the next time she saw Polly, in a pathetic lament.

"Gaston thinks we shall lose you, now you

are rich," she said. "Oh, Polly, please don't let it be true in the end. He said 'in the end.'"

"Capt. Framleigh holds as high an opinion of me as ever, I see," said Polly, caustically. "I am much obliged to him. You know it won't be true, Cicely. I care for you more than I care for any one else in the world—even more than I care for Uncle Jack, and that is saying a great deal." And when she met Framleigh, she disposed of the matter in rather a high-handed way.

"Thank you for trying to persuade Cicely that a paltry fortune would make me less fond of her," she said. "It was kind of you to try to make her distrust me. If we have never been friends, Capt. Framleigh, I thought we had not been exactly enemies. If you distrust me yourself——"

"I not trust you!" he interposed, looking so pale that he made her feel uncomfortable and half-vexed at her own injustice. "*I* your enemy! Nay, you know, as well as I do, that is not true."

"I thank you, again," said Polly, with haughty perversity.

Her trouble with this man was her recognition of his proud humility. Sting or stab him as she might, he never retorted. He bore his burden in silence, and with a patience which had disturbed her more than once. He had altered strangely since the time when he had so roused her pride and resentment. Misfortune and humiliation had changed him. Cicely's influence had subdued him, as it were, and something, more subtly powerful still, had done the rest. He was as proud as ever, it is true, but his pride was of a different order.

"I suppose I deserve this," he said to his persecutor, with a certain dignity now, "but it is not easy to bear." And, noting the pain in his face, Polly was guilty of relenting, reluctantly, even once again.

Certainly, there must have been a wonderful novelty to this young lady, in her new position. There must have seemed a sort of unreality in her sudden change of fortune, in the sudden finding of herself as a person of importance.

Composed as she looked, she must have felt some slight excitement during the following weeks of preparation. It must have been a trifle startling to find herself, her simple self, Pretty Polly P., of the Prince's, transacting business with lawyers, receiving visits from landlords and upholsterers, giving orders, entering into agreements, superintending arrangements, and paying bills; for the furnishing and fitting up of the new house in Blank Square necessitated the paying of bills whose sum total, a few months before, would have represented to her inexperienced eyes quite a little fortune.

"I want everything to be pretty," she said to Cicely, with an inconsistent sigh. "Money will buy me pretty things, if it will buy nothing else one wants."

"Nothing else one wants!" echoed Cicely. "I thought money would buy everything."

"It won't buy happiness," murmured Polly, as if half unconscious that she was speaking.

"I should think," said Cicely, "that you would have no need to buy happiness."

"Happiness, indeed?" cried Miss Polly,



waking suddenly from her reverie. "Is there such a thing in the world?"

But the new establishment was very pretty. Everything it contained was pretty and tasteful, Cicely thought; and as to Teddy Popham—when Teddy made his first visit to Blank Square, and found Polly in her own artistic, grand-looking parlor, in company with Montmorenci, in a new gown of the thickest and softest of black satin, and a chaste head-dress of lace, he was so completely charmed that he could scarcely contain his feelings, and so, knowing himself a privileged person, he gave vent to them.

"It is just the exact style of thing to suit you, Polly," he cried, enthusiastically. "Didn't I always tell you that swelldom was your element? It suits you, you know. You always seem too tall for little rooms, and too—too—well, statuesque, and all that sort of thing, for ordinary surroundings."

The young lady had not been enjoying her new state and pomp for many days before she found her way back to Cicely's parlor, and

having spent an evening with her friend, ended her visit with stirring up Capt. Gaston again.

“I hope, whenever Cicely comes to see me—and that must be often—you will come with her,” she said, just before she went away. “I shall always like to see you.” And then, coloring warmly, and looking a little awkward as she met his eyes, she gave him her hand, for the first time since the night upon which she had so cavalierly told him that he had better remain at home.

## CHAPTER XII.

## GOADED TO CONFESSION.

IT really was surprising to see how Polly adapted herself to circumstances, and how impossible it was to disturb her grave self-possession. As Teddy had admiringly remarked, "swelldom" seemed to be her element, and became her. And what a success she was at Blank Square, to be sure! What an admirable mistress she made for the handsome house, and what a talent she developed for rendering all things well-ordered. She could manage even Uncle Jack, who was disposed to be a trifle more blatant and consequential than usual in his ecstasy, and even Montmorenci, who was apt to feel herself overwhelmed. And how they missed her at the Prince's, some of them even shedding tears over her, when she bade them farewell. Old Buxton himself was reported to have wept, but how far that legend is true, it would be difficult to assume. Her

first entertainment at Blank Square was given to her old friends and fellow-actors, and not one of them was left out, from old Buxton to the call-boy, who adored her, and sniffed audibly when Blathers (that celebrated tragedian) made a speech during supper, and proposed her health as "Pretty Polly P."

"For," said Blathers, with feeling, "though oceans wide should between us roll, even though she should become the per-roud ber-ride of a de-ucal ke-oronet, and a de-iadem should rest upon her be-row, Pretty Polly P. would be Pretty Polly P. to our fe-aithful hearts to the last." With which touching sentiment, he sat down in triumph, and wiped his eyes with a white handkerchief of appalling size, scorning to conceal his emotion.

Cicely was present at this entertainment, and so, of course, was Teddy Popham, who, I will remark, made himself immensely popular, as he always did; and Framleigh was there also. Polly, as hostess, was quite entrancing. She vied with her own carnations—the carnations she wore in her hair and at her belt—in color,

her eyes shone, and every vestige of that severe air melted away. She danced with her admirers, one after the other; she found partners for all the young ladies, and whist-tables for all the older ones; and showed herself withal so tactful and bewitching a hostess, that it was easy to comprehend why she had always been such a favorite. And among the rest she danced with Framleigh. During one of the waltzes, he caught sight of her standing a little apart from the rest, twisting a red carnation in her fingers, and looking quite as if she had forgotten herself and her guests for a moment; so he succumbed to a sudden impulse, and went to her, and wakened her from her revery, by addressing her in the very words he had used on that eventful "evening" of Mrs. Pomphrey's.

"Will you waltz with me?" he said.

She started a little as she raised her eyes.

"Waltz?" she said, a trifle abstractedly. "Oh, I beg pardon! I forgot. Yes, I will waltz!"

He led her out among the dancers, and placed his arm around her waist.

"It is a long time since that first waltz of ours," he said, as they whirled off.

"Not so long, really," she answered. "But so many things seemed to have happened since then. It was at Mrs. Pomphrey's, where I went to act. That was the first time, too, that I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Dalrymple. By-the-by, Miss Dalrymple called upon me, this morning."

She was very fond of trying to convince herself that he was to marry Miss Dalrymple. He would be sure to do so, eventually, she always insisted mentally. He was not the sort of man to throw away fortune and position for the sake of a scruple. And yet, in spite of her inward determination, he had not yet made the slightest move toward marrying Miss Dalrymple; in fact, he was even so indiscreet, as to avoid her a little, and receive fewer cups of tea from her fair hands. So, on this occasion, he did not pursue the subject of Miss Dalrymple, but began again.

"I have never before had the opportunity to congratulate you," he said. "You must let me do so now."

"Wait until I have tried being rich for a year, and then congratulate me, if I am not tired of it," she said. "Perhaps, I shall be like the hatter I once read of, who made a fortune; and then made himself ill with wishing for his work again; and at last was obliged to make hats to save his life. Perhaps I shall find I cannot live without the Prince's and the footlights. But," with a slight shrug of her shoulders, "with me it will be different. I shall be acting still, but on a new stage; playing the part of first walking lady—a part I was not born to. I wonder if I shall not often find that I don't even know my cues?"

Then she looked across the room, and nodded to Cicely, who was standing talking and listening sweetly to the tragic Blathers, upon every lineament of whose expressive countenance the most intense admiration and reverence was written.

"Look at Cicely, now," she said. "The part would come to her by nature—she would never forget her cues. Five thousand a year is what one would naturally expect Fortune to bestow

upon Cicely. Why has it been given to me? Why——?” And then she stopped herself abruptly, and the fine, severe air of gravity fell upon her, all at once, like a mask. “I beg pardon,” she said. “What nonsense I am talking. Is not the time of that waltz a little slow?”

Framleigh really felt that he never was seen to so poor advantage as when he was in this young lady's presence. She was fond of making difficult speeches to him, when she addressed him at all, and of making sarcastic assertions concerning herself, which common politeness commanded him to contradict, without giving him the ghost of a chance to contradict them, since she gave him the impression that she was so completely indifferent that gallant speeches would be at once absurd and officious. It was much to be regretted that the amiability of so charming a young creature was not more above reproach.

But as I have before said, he bore it patiently, even while he felt himself at a disadvantage. Perhaps it was Cicely who led him so often to the Blank Square establishment that winter, or,



perhaps, he found it hard to resist temptation. He always accompanied Cicely in her visits, however, and accordingly, was placed in a somewhat dangerous position. Is it not a dangerous position for a man, who loves a delectable young creature, to be frequently in that delectable young creature's presence? To see her in her own household, to behold her charms, to thrill at the sound of her voice, to long to touch her hand and praise her fresh, sweet beauty, without being permitted to do either? And this position was Gaston Framleigh's during these months. His bitter-sweet portion it was to stand and look on, while Miss Polly enacted her new *rôle* in so apt and fascinating a manner. Of course, she became popular. Of course society confessed her power at once. The heiress to five thousand a year was not to be ignored. Besides this, did not Mrs. Grundy speedily learn that this handsome young person was really a member of a most excellent family, a Scotch Rossitur, one of the Rossiturs of Ayrshire? Indeed, the story of her life made her all the more interesting. Her mother, Miss Alison

Rossitur, had been disinherited in consequence of her sad *mésalliance* ; and this, her daughter, had actually supported herself, and that delightful, hospitable old gentleman, her uncle, by her exertions upon the stage, which had, indeed, been most highly commendable. It was quite a pretty romance. And we must all know her ! “ Charles, you must dance with Miss Pemberton, dear ! Edgar, is it possible you have not been introduced yet ? My dear Mrs. De Browne, you really must present me to the heroine of this touching little history.”

It was thus society talked. And Polly was in great request consequently. She received callers ; she received invitations ; her programme, when she attended evening parties, was full, and pressed down, and running over.

The youngest and most imposing Miss Fitz Robynsonne, Beatrix, the blonde, who was just “ out,” and had created no inconsiderable sensation before her advent, sank immediately after it into comparative insignificance. Young ladies, who had the reputation of being wits found their stars paling before her greater

brilliance. She said wittier things than any of them, and, withal, could be more severe. Her taste was unexceptionable, and, alas for them! inimitable. Some of them had secretly hoped that she would be a trifle "loud," and theatrical, but she was not. Her dress was simple elegance itself, and so were her surroundings, though she was daring enough to hold to Montmorenci and Uncle Jack more firmly than ever. And as for those who attempted to satirize the peculiarities of that excellent couple, woe betide them! Miss Polly's fine eyes flashed lightnings upon them; her fine air overawed them; her sharp scathing wit beat them back into oblivion and frightened them into ignominious silence. She herself was afraid of nothing, and was equal to any emergency.

"A fellow cannot help admiring her," cried Teddy Popham, enthusiastically. "She takes a man by storm. There is something in her to admire. See how she holds those young muffs at arm's length, and forces them to respect her. She did just the same thing, when

she was only Pretty Polly P., at the Prince's. They dare advance no farther then than they dare now. There are not many women who can control them in such a way."

How could it be expected otherwise than that Framleigh should admire her with the rest, should find his hidden passion growing stronger day by day, and rendering him at times very hopeless, and desperate, and discontented indeed? Even if she had looked upon him with favor—and he was sure that she did not—pride itself would have forbidden him to make advances toward her. The tables were turned in these days, and it was Pretty Polly P., whom he had once patronized with frigid condescension, who held the reins of power in her own hands. How could he dare to sue for the favor of this handsome, high-spirited creature, upon which he had once quite looked down? A penniless Captain of the Guards, who lived upon his pay, would be a nice match for her, forsooth! It was rather galling, too, to see these young whippersnappers dancing attendance upon her, filling up

her programme, carrying her bouquet, picking up her fan, while he felt forced to stand aloof.

"Good evening, Capt. Framleigh," she would say, when he came to her to ask for a dance (for he found himself obliged to drift back again into society, to some extent, after his friends found Cicely out). "Good evening." And she would hold out her fair hand, with the most graceful air imaginable. "Cicely has been carried away, as usual, I see, before she has had the chance to speak to any of us. A dance? Certainly, if I have one to spare. Waltz third? Let me see—that belongs to Mr. Trelawney. And the fourth to Sir John, here. And the fifth. Ah, so sorry, but I have not a waltz left. But there is a quadrille here, toward the last, if we both remain so long. You may have that."

And he was fain to content himself, and appear grateful. But, really, since the change of her fortune, Polly treated him better than she had been wont to do. His reception at Blank Square was always a kindly one, and now and then she even condescended to check herself,

when she was on the point of making one of her most severe speeches. But disappointment and restless self-contempt made such a change in him, in spite of all ameliorating circumstances, that, at last, even Teddy Popham found him out.

"You are not happy, old fellow," he said to Gaston, one day. "You don't look like yourself. You are getting old before your time, and you are losing your beauty. You ought to marry, and settle down."

"Whom shall I marry?" demanded the Captain, coolly.

"Why," said Teddy, cheerfully, and with amiable discretion, "there are lots of nice girls, you know. There's the Dalrymple, for instance. Why don't you take her? The old boy would come to his senses then——"

"Popham," interposed his friend, "do you think the Dalrymple would take me, if I were to offer myself?"

Teddy stared at him. He did not quite understand something in his tone.

"Well, she seems to like you," he answered.

"And there is nothing like trying, you know. And it certainly would be a good thing if you could regain your old prospects."

"Even if I didn't care a copper farthing for the Dalrymple?" commented Framleigh. "So it would."

"Well—no," hesitated Teddy. "I didn't mean that, of course. I was taking it for granted that you would learn to care for her. She—she's confounded handsome, you see!" in an embarrassed burst.

"I should not care the copper farthing for her if she was ten times as handsome as she is," said Framleigh, and then, all at once, the truth blurted out in spite of him. "There is only one woman on earth to me," he said, bitterly.

Teddy could hardly believe his ears. What! had it come to that?

"Only one woman on earth!" he said. "I don't understand. I hadn't thought of that." And then, a sudden thought startling him, he began to falter, and stare at his friend, more amazed than ever.

"There—there's only one woman it *could* be,

if it is not Diana Dalrymple," he said. "And yet I cannot believe——"

"You may go on," said Framleigh, flinging out his words quite irritably. "You are going to guess aright, but I should have thought you might have seen. I thought I had been fool enough to betray it, long ago."

"It isn't—no, it isn't," said Teddy. "Look here, Framleigh, it can't be Polly P."

"Isn't, and can't be," repeated Framleigh. "But it *is*, I tell you, and it is no other; and you may write me down an ass, for my pains."



## CHAPTER XIII.

## A PIECE OF ADVICE.

WHEN Teddy heard these words, he shook his head dubiously.

"Well," he said, "I must confess, it looks pretty bad. She has always been so down on you, somehow or other, you see."

"Down on me!" cried his friend, laughing outright. "Down on me? I should think she was. And 'down on me' is the only happy expression which seems to convey the idea. Thank you, my boy." And he dragged at his mustache with quite a ferocious air.

He looked so savagely wretched over it, that Teddy felt impelled to offer an attempt at comfort. "But then, you know," he suggested, rather feebly, "that it is not such a bad sign, in some women. I have heard fellows say that it wasn't a bad sign at all; and perhaps is isn't; but—but," with reluctance, "it is rather awk-

ward that—well, that you didn't seem to like her more—at first——”

“Rather,” returned Framleigh, laconically, and then his savage air came back upon him, and he turned upon his friend abruptly. “You don't suppose I am such a fool as to think of ever asking her to marry me now, do you?” he demanded.

“It will be rather hard on you, if you don't!” said Teddy.

Framleigh quite glared. Hard on him! The thought of it almost drove him mad. Just to think of standing by, and watching some rascal carry her off. Every man, who might chance to rival him, was a “rascal,” in his present frame of mind.

“And,” added Teddy, “whatever you may think now about not asking her to marry you, I am afraid you will find it harder to face than you fancy. It will get the better of you, some day, fight against it as you may; it will, I tell you. I have been through all that myself, you see; so I know. The fact is there is only one thing could save you from it.”

"And that?" said Framleigh.

"Oh, that is not to be thought of. It is going away somewhere—somewhere far enough off to make sudden coming back the next thing to impossible—exchanging to India, or something of that kind."

Framleigh rose, and began to pace the floor restlessly.

"And why is such a thing not to be thought of?" he demanded. "It is the best thing, after all, and, to tell the truth, I have thought of it often enough before in secret. I cannot stand this. And what you say is true. If I try to stand it, I shall make an idiot of myself before I know what I am doing. Why isn't it to be thought of? It is to be thought of. It——"

"It will be rather hard on Cicely," put in Teddy, gravely.

Framleigh paused. Twelve months ago, he would soon have disposed of Cicely; but now he did not find it so easy. It would be rather hard upon her, to be sure, to be sent back to the barrenness of "Bareacres," without so

much as "by your leave." So thinking of Cicely, he turned round to Teddy, his fire toned down into haggard weariness.

"No," he said. "It would not do, I see. I forgot about Cicely." And there, for the time being, the matter ended.

Among the many excellent and discerning people who had begun to take a polite interest in Miss Polly, Diana Dalrymple ranked foremost. The romantic little history had quite touched her heart, it seemed. She told it to her friends, and related it to her masculine admirers with quite a grace, when she sat at the marble-topped table, dispensing nectar. Effusive, after the manner of ordinary mortals, Miss Dalrymple could never be, but certainly she was very polite to Polly, in a ceremonious style. She had called upon her, at an early day, carrying her mamma with her, and touching graciously upon their former acquaintance, and after the first call, she had managed the rest with her usual admirable tact. Indeed, her coolly satisfied suavity inspired Framleigh to indulge in a sarcasm more than once.

"You find Miss Pemberton a very charming friend?" he said to her one evening.

She went on with her tatting, serenely, as she answered him, with the manner of the stateliest of misconstrued goddesses.

"If you intend to be sarcastic, Gaston," she said, "I must submit, of course. Pardon me for saying that I do find Miss Pemberton more agreeable than I anticipated."

"It is astonishing how many people have made the same discovery of late," said Framleigh.

"One may be deceived," returned Miss Dalrymple, with fine self-satisfaction. "If one has made a mistake, it is but just to acknowledge it." And she went on with her work composedly.

"My dear Diana," said Framleigh. "You will never make a mistake."

After a while, however, he began to see that Polly rather encouraged the intimacy, and he was anything but comfortable. He never accepted an invitation to Blank Square without being sure of encountering Diana, and he never

encountered her without being mystified by Polly's manner.

Polly managed, in her character as hostess, to throw them together, and leave them together. She managed to place Framleigh at his cousin's side whenever there was an opportunity, and sometimes she even made opportunities. He could not understand it at all, at first; but when the truth did begin to dawn upon him, he was stung to the core. She was playing the part of a graciously indifferent friend to him. She took just enough cool interest in his fortunes to take an outsider's plan to retrieve them. She knew that if he married Diana, the pomps and luxuries of Gaston Court would be his again; and so she thought he had better marry Diana, and she threw her into his path accordingly. Pleasant this, truly—pleasant, indeed! He almost made up his mind to remain at home; but, after raging inwardly for a week or so in solitude, he found he could not, and so gave way.

And when he made his next visit, the climax was reached. Diana was not there, but Polly

was alone, and in a strange mood. She was cold and warm by turns, for an hour, and talked much feverish nonsense, and, indeed, was so evidently uncertain of herself, that he felt something was going to happen. And something did. She led him into an artful conversation, talked to him about Cicely, and about "Bareacres," and, at last, led him to Gaston Court, and, having betrayed him into displaying something of warmth in describing its venerable beauties, fell upon him suddenly.

"It is a great pity that you should lose it," she said.

She was sitting upon an ottoman, holding a pretty screen of flamingo feathers between herself and the fire; and when he turned to see what the unexpected ring of suggestion in her voice meant, he saw that her color was brighter than the blaze need have made it.

"You said once," he answered her, "that in my place you would accept almost any alternative——"

"I said 'any,' not 'almost any,'" commented Polly, coolly.

"And you know," he persisted, "what alternative it has been left me to accept. Yes, I know you do."

"I suppose I may as well admit that I do," answered Polly.

"Thank you," he said, his blood rising to a white heat.

Polly began to wave her flamingo feathers, with a very unreadable expression in her eyes. She even frowned a little, and looked slightly severe.

"Why should it be so hard?" she said. "Why should it seem so dreadful an alternative, to marry a beautiful woman whom everybody admires? I do not see why, I must confess."

He was so heated and unsteady, and in so desperate a frame of mind, that he was actually imprudent enough to rise from his chair, and go toward her.

"Shall I tell you why?" he demanded. "Shall I tell you why?"

She was obliged to drop her screen, and pick it up, and look at him with as cold and polite-



ly-interested a face as she could summon up. It would have been stupidity itself to try to avoid his glance.

"Yes," she said. "N-no. Yes—No." And then, all at once, at the sound of the door-handle turning, she rose to her feet. "Good evening, Mr. Trelawny," she said with extreme graciousness. And, to add to the pleasantness of his position, Framleigh found himself glaring at that most innocent young swell, with whom he stood almost face to face.

Awkward as it was, at the time, he was not sorry afterward that Fate had so interposed to save him from betraying himself, as he had certainly been on the point of doing.

The incident had proved that Teddy was right. It would be the next thing to impossible to keep within bounds. And was it not imperative that he should control himself? What an indifference was this, which could give him such advice as she had given him? She had never been kind to him, since their misunderstanding; she had often been haughty

and severe ; but this was cruel. Yes, cruelty itself, since she could not have been so blind as not to see the truth. The fact was, Capt. Gaston knew less of Miss Polly than her most distant acquaintance did, or, at least, he knew as little. He knew only that he had learned to love her, and that he was sure she regarded him with contempt, and both pride and love suffered so keenly through this knowledge, that even his worst enemy might have pitied him. How tired he was of those informal winter-evening visits, before the spring came ; and yet how impossible he found it to forego them altogether. He was more pallid and worn, by the end of the winter, than the most dissipated belle of the season. Cicely began to be quite anxious about him, and Teddy Popham, when spoken to upon the subject, shook his head gravely and mysteriously ; and even Polly at last condescended to observe to her friend that Capt. Framleigh looked ill, and surely needed change of air.

And at last, though quite through a trick of chance, he got change of air. There came to

him one morning, at breakfast, a letter from Gaston Court, containing unexpected and exciting news. Mr. Gaston was ill—an apoplectic attack—and wished to see him at once. His lawyer wrote the letter, and intimated that there was a probability of a fatal termination to the illness. Certainly Framleigh's heart beat rather spasmodically, as he read this epistle. It might mean a great deal, and it must mean something, though he was by no means so sanguine as Cicely, who believed that it meant nothing else than that her idol was to be taken into favor again.

“You must go at once,” cried this mercenary young creature. “I will run and pack your valise while you finish your breakfast. I can stay at Blank Square, Gaston, while you are away. Polly has often asked me, and I always refused, because I could not bear to leave you alone.” And she positively did run away, after pouring him out a second cup of coffee, leaving her own untouched, that there might not be a moment's unnecessary delay. But when she came out of the bed-room, she was

looking more sober, and, indeed, was quite in a repentant mood.

"I'm afraid I—I am rather wicked and selfish," she said, naïvely. "I am afraid I was not sorry for Mr. Gaston at all. I could not help feeling so glad that he was going to do you justice. He must be very lonely, poor old man, dying all alone. How cruel I was to be so mercenary, and think only of his money." And she looked quite tearful over her own innocent iniquity.

One can readily imagine how she confided in her friend, when she reached Blank Square, and how the two sat together, before the drawing-room fire, with their worsted work, and discussed the matter, though, taking all things into consideration, Miss Polly said very little, though she listened very well.

"I thought, when he paid the debts, that he must be softening a little," said Cicely, "for, of course, it was he who paid them, though he did act so strangely afterward, and refuse to acknowledge doing it, even when Gaston wrote to thank him. You know no one else could

have paid them, Polly. There *was* no one else, in fact."

"Of course there was no one else," commented Miss Polly. "No one else who could have taken sufficient interest in him."

"No one in the world," agreed Cicely, spreading her work out on her knee, and regarding it critically. And then she went on to enlarge on the various incidents which proved the person who paid the debts to have been Mr. Gaston, and no one else, and also to descant on the many perfections of the beloved one, and his many generousities to her unworthy self, and was so prettily grateful, and innocently in earnest, that Polly looked at her askant, from under her long, black lashes, and asked herself sternly how it happened that she herself was not so tender and loving.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## HE IS A GENTLEMAN.

ALL that week, Cicely remained at Blank Square, and part of the next, receiving, in the meantime only one brief, hurried note from her brother. Mr. Gaston was in great danger, and the end might come at any moment. He was very irritable, Framleigh wrote, very exacting, and not much altered. He had learned something very singular, which he would tell Cicely on his return, and as for the rest, he did not appear at all sanguine as to the result of his visit. But his note was very affectionate, and so very satisfactory to the recipient, who, of course, showed it to Polly.

On the following Thursday, however, the absentee returned, and coming to Blank Square, was enthusiastically received by Cicely, who was sitting alone in the drawing-room, waiting for Polly and Montmorenci, who had gone out.

"At last!" she cried, when he came in. "How glad I am, dear. But you are paler than ever, Gaston, and look quite worn out. Sit down and rest, and tell me about it when you feel less tired. Ah! Gaston——" faltering suddenly, as she met his haggard eyes. "You have bad news."

He made a very poor attempt to smile.

"It is not good news," he said. "You know I was hardly sanguine about it. It is all over, Cicely, as far as my hopes are concerned. We need cling to shadows no longer."

The tears rushed to Cicely's eyes, in spite of her efforts.

"Is—is he dead?" she ventured.

"No," was his answer. "Not yet. That is the worst. We have quarreled again, Cicely; or, rather, I think I may say, I have displeased Mr. Gaston again, since the anger was on his side, and not on mine."

"How did it happen?" she asked, in a dropped voice, the tears falling over her cheeks, as she looked at the fire, and thought how dull the future appeared, and how hard it would be

for her hero to bear it. Ah, how cruel Fate had been to him!

He hesitated a moment, before he answered her. It was, upon the whole, rather a delicate and difficult query to reply to.

"It was the old condition we disagreed about," he said, somewhat awkwardly. "I could not accept the alternative he offered."

"The alternative!" exclaimed Cicely. "Gaston!"

"The alternative was Diana Dalrymple," he returned, quite flushing.

"He wanted you to marry her!"

Gaston bent his head.

She put out her loving hand, and caught his in a tender pressure.

"And you did not think you could care enough," she cried. "And were too generous to ask her to be your wife, unless you could—even for the sake of gaining Gaston Court, and all that money. Oh, Gaston! how proud I am of you! What other man would have been so honorable and generous?"

She spoke in innocent, admiring ecstasy.



And, indeed, she believed, quite sincerely, that no other man could have been; and that this faulty brother of hers had no peer on earth.

Perhaps it was this very *naïveté* of hers which had won from Framleigh the confession which he had so unexpectedly made to Teddy Popham. She was so fond of him, and always so grateful for his confidences, and again he felt so worn out with his conflict. "Why should he not tell her his secret?" he said to himself. So, in a moment more, it was revealed.

"If I had married Diana Dalrymple," he said, wondering if she would understand him—"if I had married Diana Dalrymple, I should have lost more than Gaston Court—I should have lost the right to love the woman who is more to me than a score of such fortunes could be."

She understood him in an instant, though, since that night when he had first mentioned Polly, she had been often baffled and mystified.

"And that woman is Polly!" she cried out, piteously, because she felt his case to be so hopeless. "It is Polly for whom you

have sacrificed all your hopes ; and Polly is the only person who is severe and unjust toward you."

"Which proves me to have been disinterested," he answered, with a still weaker attempt at a smile ! "Yes, Cicely, it is Polly, and I have thrown away the substance for her shadow's sake."

There was a silence then, in which Cicely cried softly over him, holding his hand, and admiring him, and wondering in secret how it was possible that Polly could be so blind and stony of heart ; so blind as not to see ; so stony-hearted as to be able to resist so many perfections and glorious attributes. It was Framleigh who ended the pause.

"But the strangest part of the story is yet to come," he said. "I had almost forgotten to tell you. Mr. Gaston denies all knowledge of the debts having been paid. He declared, almost indignantly, that he had nothing whatever to do with the matter, and had returned my letter unopened because he did not choose to engage in a correspondence."

Cicely regarded him with utter amazement.

"But who could have, if he did not?" she exclaimed. "There is no one else. Polly and I said so only the other day. Are you sure that he meant what he said?"

"I am quite sure," was the answer. "He was sufficiently in earnest to be quite irritable at the idea of my fancying that he had been guilty of such a weakness, as he evidently considered it. It was not Mr. Gaston, whoever else it may have been."

There was the end of Cicely's building of fairy castles. They fell into the dust now in good sooth; and they buried all her high hopes with them.

When her brother left her, as he did before Polly returned, she went back to her place by the fire, and cried over the fading of her dreams most piteously. Oh, how dreadful it all was, indeed! And "poor Gaston—poor fellow!"—the tears running over her pretty cheeks at such a rate that her nice little handkerchief was quite damp.

Everybody was cruel and unjust to him:

even Polly, who was so kind to other people, and for whom he had so nobly sacrificed all. She almost felt as if she had no right to love Polly so much herself, though how she was to help it she could not tell. Was it possible that Polly could let things go on in this way still, and in the end could be so adamant of soul as to marry somebody else? Oh, it must not be! It could not be! Could she not say something to Polly, which, without actually betraying Gaston, would make her friend see the truth—just guess at it? Poor Gaston indeed! Ah, she knew very well how it was. If Polly had been poor, it would have been different; but he was too proud to speak now, when this horrible money stood between them.

And she wept afresh, and even worked herself into an inconsistent little fever of half conscience-stricken anger against Polly; and when that young lady came in from her shopping tour, Cicely rather surprised her with her dampness of appearance, and the tearful flush on her soft cheeks.

"It is all at an end," she said, the minute Polly sat down. "He has come back."

Polly started, but managed to recover herself.

"He?" she said. "Oh, you mean your brother. Has he, indeed? And Mr. Gaston? He is dead, I suppose?"

Cicely shook her head.

"No," she answered. "He was not when Gaston left him, though the doctors said he could not recover. He quarreled with Gaston again, and would not even let him stay, he was so angry."

"He must be an amiable old gentleman," commented Polly, irreverently. "What was it all about, Cicely?"

Cicely's eyes fixed themselves on the grate, and she began to play with her handkerchief, nervously. She did not look at Polly.

"He wanted him to—to marry—Diana Dalrymple," she said, with a tremor in her grave voice.

Polly started that time, and did not recover

herself, though she made a creditable effort as soon as the traitorous start was over.

"Well," she said, "that was easy enough, wasn't it? Why didn't he promise to do it?"

The tears were so near the surface, that Cicely's eyes began to fill, and her lip commenced to quiver.

"Because he—is too—too honorable," she faltered.

Polly glanced at her, uneasily.

"Why should he be?" she asked. "Diana would accept him, at any minute. And whatever I may have said about it, of course, I know that she would," with some fine disdain.

Perhaps it was this fine disdain which made Cicely's emotion get the better of her. She raised her head, and looked her friend full in the face, curving her slender neck prettily.

"He is a gentleman," she said. "And—" but here her momentary courage failed her. "And he cares for some one else," she added, a pathetic little sob catching her up, and quite altering her tone.

Polly turned absolutely pale. She was in as excitable a frame of mind as Cicely, with her starts, and flushes, and pallor.

"Then," she demanded, loftily, "why doesn't he marry the somebody else?"

Why she should have been so lofty, it would have been hard to say, unless for the rather foolish reason that she always was lofty when she spoke of Capt. Framleigh.

"It is because he is a gentleman that he cannot," cried Cicely, in a little burst of feeling and anger against Polly's coldness, commingled. "It is because he is poor, and because he is honorable. He has not even asked her, and he never will, for she is more fortunate than he is. And—and there are circumstances under which a gentleman cannot speak with honor, and so he must suffer in silence, as my poor darling will." And she laid her sweet face down, and sobbed aloud.

But, strange to say, Polly was not outwardly moved, even by this, which would have touched her inexpressibly under some circumstances. She seemed to have turned quite cold and

still, and her great, dark gray eyes were lighted with a steady fire.

“Ah,” she said, “I see now. He is too proud to speak. He is more proud than loving. He must save his pride if he loses his love. And this woman whom he pretends to love—why, he has no thought for her. He does not care for her enough to see that she might suffer too. All the pain must be on his side, forsooth; all the sacrifice—everything. He does not see that she may bear her part, and if she does—what of that? The Framleigh pride is safe, and what does it matter for the rest? ‘A gentleman!’ ‘too honorable!’ ‘too poor!’ It is too proud, I tell you, too selfish, and too cold.” And before her bewildered young friend had time to reply to her in a word of defense—indeed, could do more than gasp for breath, and stare at her lovely, haughty, impassioned face, this disdainful and extraordinary young woman turned about, and walked grandly out of the room with the air and demeanor of a tragedy-queen in a play.



## CHAPTER XV.

## IT WAS PRETTY POLLY.

AND while all this was going on, the subject under discussion was paying a visit to Teddy Popham.

Teddy greeted his friend with effusion. It was a good-natured habit of his to greet all his friends with effusion; but Framleigh being his Damon, received a warmer welcome than all the rest. He met that gentleman with open arms, so to speak; sprang out of his arm-chair, when his name was announced; tossed his book across the room, and advanced to receive him, amid a cloud of cigar-smoke.

"No end of glad to see you, old fellow," he cried, shaking his hand stormily. "I am really. Come in, have a seat, and a weed. Some first-class weeds here. Now tell us the news, you know—whether it has all come right or not, and whether the old boy has done the straightforward thing. But of

course he has—of course—he could do nothing else.”

Framleigh threw himself into a chair, and took a cigar.

“Thanks,” he interposed. “Much obliged. But don’t congratulate yet, young man. Control your transports. Here’s the news. You can have it in three words—I’m a beggar.”

And then, as soon as Teddy’s excitement had abated, he told his story, just as he had told it to Cicely.

There was no denying that Teddy looked uneasy under it. He fidgeted, and puffed, and listened, and listened, and fidgeted, and puffed, and when it was all over, he broke out, looking positively guilty.

“Well,” he said, “it’s a bad lookout, and no mistake. But—but, when I come to think of the matter coolly, I never quite saw his drift in paying those bills in that queer way.”

“My dear fellow,” said Framleigh, “he never paid them!”

Teddy almost jumped out of his seat, and then he flushed nervously.

"Never paid them!" he repeated. "He didn't? Never paid them? Then—then, who did?"

"That is what I want to know," remarked Framleigh, looking at him, questioningly. "That is what I came here to ask."

He saw then that the idea which had taken root in his mind, within the last few hours, was not without foundation; for Teddy flinched so visibly at this, that his ignorance showed itself the poorest pretence in the world.

"But why—" he began.

"Because," interrupted Framleigh, "you can tell me. You know—no one better. Come, own up, my generous old fellow." And he rose, and came to the easy-chair, with outstretched hand. "It is useless to try to hide it. You did it yourself."

But this was worse than ever. Teddy jumped up, this time excitedly, in most emphatic dissent.

"No, no," he cried, "I didn't, on honor, Framleigh—I didn't. You never made a greater blunder in your life; though I was

willing enough, the Lord knows. I hadn't the money, you know. I wouldn't take the credit of it for all I own."

Framleigh stared at him, surprised.

"Then who did?" he burst forth, a trifle irritably. "For pity's sake tell me. You know, I see."

"I daren't tell you," protested Teddy. "It's a secret, and I only found it out by the merest accident, and I oughtn't to say a word about it. If I did," despairingly, "she would never forgive me. You know, yourself, she has got the deuce of a temper, when she's roused."

"She?" exclaimed Framleigh, turning pale, and falling back a pace. "She! Who is *she*?"

"She?" stammered the badgered Teddy, wildly. "Did I say she? Oh, the deuce! It's all out, then. But, it's too bad, Framleigh; it is, I declare!"

Framleigh was as pale as his friend was flushed.

"Popham," he said, "you must tell me, I insist."

So Teddy gave it up.

"I suppose I must," he answered, driven into a most desperate corner. "I as good as told you, when I said 'she,' like a fool. I couldn't take that back, you know. It was Pretty Polly P."

That was enough. Framleigh fairly staggered. He had fancied that he had become almost hardened to the blows Fortune had aimed at his pride with such pertinacity of late. But here was a blow he had not looked for. He was so strongly agitated, that Teddy's pity began to be touched with alarm.

"Sit down, Framleigh," he said. "You look quite queer, old fellow. I did not think you would be so badly hit as this."

But he was more "badly hit" than even Teddy thought. When he sat down, he uttered something like a groan.

"And so I owe all this to her!" he said. "Though why I should, what impulse prompted her, I cannot understand. There are few women who would have been generous enough to do such a thing, so delicately, God knows; but then there are few women like her!"

And then he broke out almost fiercely. "What does it mean?" he demanded. "Why did she do it?"

Teddy shook his head gravely.

"Women are hard to understand, and it is harder to keep up with Polly than with the rest of them," he said.

"There is only one motive she could have had," said Framleigh. "She did it for Cicely's sake. She is very fond of Cicely."

But Teddy did not receive this view of the case as unreservedly as might have been expected of him. He knocked the ashes from the end of his cigar, with a reflective air, and shook his head again.

"Yes," he admitted. "It's true she's fond of Cicely; but—— Well, as I said before, Polly's hard to understand."

He was very reluctant to explain how he had gained his information; but Framleigh gathered something of the truth by degrees.

"You see," he said, "I found out by chance that this money of hers came into her possession some weeks before we heard anything

about it, and I could not help wondering why she had kept it so quiet. I was sure she must have had a motive, and then several things I had noticed at the time flashed across my mind, and I began to compare dates, and then one day, when I called, I found her lawyer with her, and as I entered the room I caught a few hurried last words. Your name, and then something about Burroughs, and then Polly saying, in her most authoritative style, 'He must think it was Mr. Gaston.' And, so I was sure, and naturally couldn't keep my face straight when you said you had discovered that he had nothing to do with it."

There was a silence of a few minutes, in which Framleigh's face set itself into new lines of haggardness; but at length he rose from his chair, almost mechanically.

"It was for Cicely's sake she did it," he said. And then he turned to Teddy, anxiously. "You will let me thank her?" he added. "I can do so without betraying you. You must let me speak, Popham. It would be cruel to

demand utter silence of me now," flushing violently. "I could not bear it."

"Well," said Teddy, driven to his wits' end, but ready to sacrifice himself, with his usual generosity, rather than sacrifice his friend, "if there is no other way out of it, I suppose I must submit; but try and spare me as much as possible."

"She shall never hear your name in connection with the subject," was the answer. "Thanks!"

"What!" exclaimed Teddy. "You are not going to her now." For Framleigh had taken his hat.

"Yes, now; I am not in the mood to wait."

So he went, and though, in his miserable excitement, he was almost unconscious of existence, he found his way back to Blank Square, startling the footman with his haggard face, and, asking for Miss Pemberton, was shown up-stairs into the drawing-room, where Polly was standing by the mantel-piece, looking down at Cicely, who was seated upon her ottoman, on the hearth.



Both turned round, when his name was announced, and Cicely got up, looking at him, wonderingly. Really, there was something to wonder at, both in his face and in his manner. Polly would have given him a most stately greeting, but he would have none of it. He passed the stateliness by, and spoke out upon the subject of his errand at once.

"I have come," he said, "to thank you for your generosity."

It was useless to adopt an air of proud surprise. She saw that she had been betrayed, but though she became first red, and then white, she would not acknowledge that she understood, at first.

"My generosity!" she exclaimed. "I was not aware——"

"Gaston!" cried Cicely. "What has she done?"

"She has made me her debtor," he answered. "And, as it was done for your sake, Cicely, you must thank her too. It was she who paid the money we fancied had come from Mr. Gaston."

"Oh, Polly!" said Cicely. "Oh, Polly, dear!" She flew to her, and hung round her neck, with one slender arm caressing her, with tears of ecstasy and gratitude.

So Polly was fain to submit. The tears started to her eyes, too, as they would have started to the eyes of any affectionate young person, whose fate it was to be cried over sweetly by the friend she loved. And yet she endeavored to sustain her character as a stony-hearted young woman.

"I do not know where you can have learned this," she said to Framleigh. "You will, at least, give me credit," grandly, "for having intended it to be a secret."

"I learned it by chance," he answered. "You have not been betrayed by any one in whom you have placed confidence. I only made the discovery a few minutes ago."

"And we never thought of you," said Cicely. "You always seemed to dislike Gaston so much, you know, dear."

Framleigh's eyes met the handsome, dark, gray ones, and Polly flushed to her forehead.

Then, overcome by some generous impulse, she held out her hand, and let him take it.

"Perhaps I was not exactly just," she admitted, with the manner of the most charming of queens deigning to make terms. "I thought I had cause to dislike him, and it is not easy for me to forgive; but—but I do not think I disliked him as much as I seemed to."

Cicely could bear it no longer. She lifted her face from her friend's shoulder, and looked at her brother.

"Gaston," she said, trembling all over, "if you would only tell her the truth. She will listen, I am sure. Oh, she must have seen—she must know. I should have known, long ago, if I had been in her place; and I am not nearly so clever as she is. Polly, you will listen, won't you? Oh, Polly!" The words bursting from her in an uncontrollable little passion of sympathy and love for them both. "It was for you he gave up Gaston Court—it is you he loves!" And the moment the words had left her lips, she flew out of the room like a frightened fawn.

Truly it was a difficult position. Polly had never confronted one so difficult, even upon the stage, in the old theatrical days. For one silent moment each looked at the other, and then Framleigh spoke, tremulously, but with proud humility.

"You must forgive her," he said. "You must forgive me!"

But the climax was reached, and even Miss Polly must be carried away by the prevailing excitement. Her scornful eyes forgot to be scornful, her slight figure forgot its disdain, her eyes sparkled with a strange touch of emotion.

"Then it is true?" she demanded. "You gave up Gaston Court and all your hopes for me?"

He bowed his head; and oh me! how she was cut to the heart, all at once, by the grave, yet hopeless dignity of his gesture! Was this the tranquil, languid, frigid "swell," whose air of the *grand seigneur* had so angered her long ago?

"And yet," she faltered, trying to hold her

own, and front him bravely, and yet feeling that she quivered in every nerve, "and yet, while you could give up all this for me, you are too—too proud. Yes, too proud to—to be open with me!"

"What!" he cried. "Nay, be just to me. Have I the right to speak? Have I——"

"You have not spoken yet," she said, forgetting herself.

"I knew that I had incurred your displeasure," he said. "I thought that I had won your dislike and distrust. I have nothing to offer you but my love, though God knows that is strong enough to have almost driven me mad with despair! I am not worthy of you——"

"You have given up all the world offered you, for my sake," she interposed. "I have been hard and unjust toward you; I would not own to myself that I had forgiven you; but I—but I——"

And just as suddenly as she had done everything else, she turned round, and laying her face upon the hand with which she had held to the mantel-piece, she ended in impetuous tears.

It was not for Cicely's sake that she had paid the money, she acknowledged afterward. It was because she had cared more for him than she would have confessed to herself, and in her secret heart she dreaded that he would go away and be quite lost to her. She had cared for him, even while she had been most severe and contemptuous. She (but it was long before she confessed this) had even cared for him, a little, when she had prohibited his visits at the little house; and it was because she had found herself beginning to care for him a little that she had done so. All her satirical speeches and scornful stings had been nothing but the result of her own anger at her own weakness. And really this must have been true, because, immediately after that interview, in which she had so seriously betrayed herself, it was observed by Teddy Popham that she was as sweet-tempered and serenely-natured as she had ever been, even in the days of Pretty Polly P. and the Prince's.

But the oddest part of the *dénouement* was that connected with the Gaston property. Per-

haps Mr. Gaston relented, or perhaps he had been careless, and had neglected arranging his affairs until it was too late ; but, however that might have been, by some trick of Fortune, our hero's sacrifice turned out to have been superfluous, for, in less than a week after his engagement, he received a legal letter, which stated that as Mr. Gaston, of Gaston Court, had died without a will, the property would, of course, fall to the next male heir, Gaston Framleigh himself.

Immediately after her cousin's marriage, Diana Dalrymple's engagement was announced. She made a good match, and is the handsomest of matrons. But she was not fond of the Framleighs, and found herself obliged to refuse the invitation to Cicely's marriage with Teddy, which occurred a few months after the Captain's.

"They are distant relations," she was wont to say, composedly, to her friends, "but we don't know much of each other. Gaston was very wild—got into debt, you know, and all that sort of thing ; and was even disinherited

by old Mr. Gaston of the Court, though he managed to get the property afterward, through his uncle's dying without a will. He knew a great many disreputable people, too, and made a shockingly low marriage—a girl off the boards, you know, a dancer, or something. The men actually used to call her 'PRETTY POLLY P.'"





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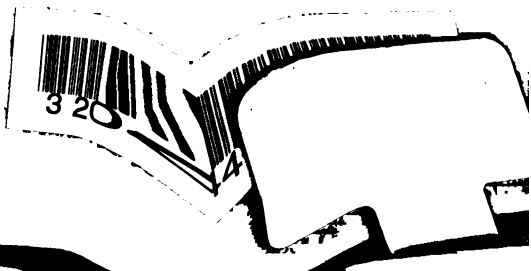
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